

The Trees in Archbishop's Park

1. Enter the park from Lambeth Road

Towards the end of the path entering the park in one of the raised beds, there is a Japanese maple, one of the many varieties of *Acer japonicum*. Other specimens of this maple can be found in the perimeter border on the left hand (west) side of the park.

There are many different maple trees, but most have a leaf with lobes, a little bit like a hand, and seeds with two wings. These seeds are very characteristic of maples. There are at least two other types of maple trees in this park.

Directly in front of you and a little to the right at the end of the path there are two large specimens of the Indian bean tree (*Catalpa bignonioides*). This tree has quite large leaves, and there may be some old beans on the floor beneath the trees. These are from Eastern United States, so 'Indian' refers to native American Indians.

Looking towards the path that crosses to park diagonally, there are four new plantings of flowering cherries, and further on, on the left is a young specimen of red oak (*Quercus rubrum*) with leaves much larger than our native oaks.

2. Take the first path immediately to the left, nearest the southern boundary
There is a row of tall trees, all of the same species, along the boundary. These are lime trees (*Tilia* species).

On the right hand side, is a tree with weeping branches, a form of the common ash tree (*Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula'). Weeping forms of trees were very popular in Victorian times (about 1850-1900) and this is probably when this tree was planted, when this park was still part of the gardens of Lambeth Palace, before it became a public park in 1901.

The next tree is possibly an Italian Alder (*Alnus cordata*) Alders usually like to grow near water.

The next tree with mistletoe growing on the trunk may be an old crab apple.

On the left hand side, the small tree with greyish green leaves and grey bark is an olive tree (*Olea europaea*).

Further on, on the right hand side are two young trees with metal protectors around their trunks. The fruits suggest that these are also crab apples (possibly *Malus sylvestris*).

3. In the corner as the path curves right is a very large tree with a grey smooth bark and shiny green leaves – a beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*).
4. Just after the corner, on the left hand side is another specimen of Indian bean tree. Next to this is a small tree with dark purple leaves – a type of flowering cherry, probably *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra'.

On the right hand side there is a large tree with the two-winged seeds characteristic of maples; this is a Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). A little further on there is another large Indian Bean Tree.

5. On the left hand side there is another large Norway Maple, but this is a cultivar with dark purple leaves (probably *Acer platanoides* 'Goldsworth Purple').
6. Further along on the left is a small tree with the label of its common name, Wild Cherry, (*Prunus avium*). A little further along is a holly tree (an *Ilex* species).
7. On the right hand side, along the side of the sports pitches, there are eight identical trees spread across the park. These are poplar trees, probably the black poplar (*Populus nigra*).
8. In the next 10-15 metres on the left hand side there are eight or more tall trees with large compound leaves. The trunk is fairly smooth with grey vertical stripes. This is the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). A handsome tree with a peaceful name, but the young saplings are aggressive and quickly dominate most other plants growing nearby, even other small trees.
9. At the end of the sports pitches on the right is the children's play area which contains several trees. The first two on the right nearest the path have lobed leaves characteristic of the genus of oak trees. But these leaves are much larger and more deeply lobed than our native oaks. These two trees are American pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) and the leaves colour well in autumn. Further in the children's garden behind the first pin oak is a blue-needled conifer tree, an Atlas cedar tree (*Cedrus atlantica*) from the Atlas Mountains of North Africa.
10. Following the main path to the right round the children's play area, there is an avenue of mostly huge London plane trees to the left of the path. The massive trees that can be seen here and all over London were planted in the 18th and 19th centuries, so some trees are over 300 years old. The origin of the London plane is a mystery because it is a hybrid tree - its parents come from the same genus (*Platanus*), but are of different species. One comes from the United States (*Platanus occidentalis*) and the other from South East Europe (*Platanus orientalis*). It is very unlikely these trees 'met' naturally and so it is likely it happened where both had been introduced. This was probably around 1650 in Spain or France, but some like to think it was in London. Another name for the London plane is the maple-leafed plane, because the leaves look somewhat like those of a maple. The fruit and seeds hang like baubles indicating it is definitely not a maple.
11. In the middle of the children's garden there are several palm trees, the Chusan palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) from China.
12. Further along the path alongside the Children' garden there are several trees. These are
13. At the end of this path there is another island bed with two more palm trees with leaves like fans.
14. Turn right and follow the path lined with more huge London planes back to where the walk started.