

The Salford Arboretum

By Oliver Bishop

The University is fortunate in that it is surrounded by acres of greenery. One of its main attractions is the amount and diversity of trees on our campus. This following tree walk is a brief tour of some of the most popular and stunning trees on Peel Campus starting at the SouthWest corner of Peel Park, and explores the trees folklore, superstitions and heritage. The information has been gathered by Oliver Bishop and presented in his dissertation.

Trees

When I sit under a green tree,
Silent, and breathing all the while
As easy as a sleeping child,
And smiling with a soft a smile –
Then, as my brains begin to work,
This is the thought that comes to me:
Were such a peace more often mine,
I'd live as long as the green tree.

W.H.Davies (1916)

Silver maple (*Acer Saaccharinum*)



Appearance: A deciduous, often multi-trunked tree with an irregular crown.

Bark: Grey to grey-brown.

Leaves: The delicate, narrow leaves are divided into 5 lobes. Each lobe is narrowly pointed and deeply toothed. The undersides of the leaves are silvery-white.

Flowers: Yellow-green in dense clusters. Flowers in spring.

Fruit: Pale brown winged fruit

Harvesting Maple Sugar:

North American aborigines were creating sugar from maple trees long before any European settler landed in America. Even today, the sap of the sugar maple (*A. saccharum*) is used to create maple syrup. Similarly, the silver maple can be tapped in early spring for its sweet sap.

- You will need a length of plastic tube, a drill, dowelling and a container
- In early spring, when the nights and mornings are still cold, drill a hole into the trunk at a slightly upward angle. The hole should be about 7cm deep.
- Insert one end of the plastic tube into the trunk and the other end into your container
- Leave for 24 hours
- Once you remove the tube fill the hole up with the dowelling
- The sap can then be reduced by boiling, making sure that you watch it constantly to see that it doesn't boil over
- If the boiling syrup creates a thin, spidery thread when dripped of a spoon it has boiled enough
- Remove the syrup from the heat, leave to cool and then stir with a wooden spoon.
- The syrup should begin to crystallize as it cools, giving you sugar.

Weeping Willow (Salix Sp.)



Appearance: A deciduous, spreading tree with a rounded crown and long pendulous yellow shoots.

Bark: Pale grey-brown and fissured.

Leaves: The alternate, finely toothed leaves end in tapered points.

Flowers: slender, yellow catkins. Flowers in spring.

Fruit: Small green capsules.

People have been using willow trees to cure aches and pains since the 16th Century. Essentially, we still practice this tradition today. The pain killer Aspirin was created by isolating salicylic acid from willow trees in 1897. Willows were also once the emblem of the broken hearted. Anyone who had been deserted by love would wear a piece of willow on their clothes. Maybe, just maybe, the willow's healing properties could mend a broken heart.

Holly (*Illex Sp.*)



Appearance: An evergreen tree that is sometimes shrubby with green or purple shoots. Spiny leaves generally occur on younger trees and lower shoots, while smooth leaves occur on older tree and higher shoots.

Bark: Smooth, thin and silvery or dark grey.

Leaves: Glossy, dark green, alternate leaves that range from oval to oblong.

Flowers: White or purple/pink-flushed flowers grow in clusters.

Fruit: Shiny red berries

We often associate holly trees with winter. Pagans used holly to decorate their homes in their winter solstice celebrations. Once the Christian Church failed to ban the custom, they adopted instead. Now the foliage is used at Christmas time to 'festive up' homes across Britain. Yet celebrators beware, it is very unlucky to have holly inside the house outside of the Christmas period. Each leaf left indoors will bring its own misfortune to the owner of the house. If left outside however, holly trees can provide strong protection against house goblins, which can only be a good thing.

London Plane (Plantus X Hispanica)



Appearance: A deciduous tree with a heavily branched crown.

Bark: Grey, brown and crème coloured, creating a mosaic like pattern. **Leaves:** maple-like with five toothed lobes. Glossy, bright green above and paler underneath.

Flowers: Tiny and in pendulous, rounded clusters. Opposite to the Manchester Poplar, the male flowers are green and the females are red and are on the same tree.

Fruit: Dense, rounded clusters that hang individually or in pairs. They stay on the tree throughout winter

Similarly to the Manchester poplar, London planes were planted within the city of London because it can withstand air pollution. The tree regularly sheds its bark, clearing away any city soot. This produces the tree's characteristic mosaic pattern. Unlike the Manchester poplar, the London plane is not a British native at all. In fact, there are no native planes in Britain. It is actually a hybrid between the Oriental plane from southeast Europe and the American plane from the USA. But the tree has become such a common sight in Britain it has been given our country's capital city for its name. Further adding to our country's cultural and ecological melting pot.

Silver Birch (*Betula Pendula*)



Appearance: An oval-crowned deciduous tree. The branches are angled upwards and then tend to curve downwards towards the tips.

Bark: White, often developing diamond shaped black markings at the base of mature trees.

Leaves: Glossy and dark green leaves, which are oval to triangular, edged with double teeth.

Flowers: Tiny flowers are borne in catkins. The male flowers droop. The females start upright and later droop.

Fruit: Small, two-winged nutlets which easily break up when ripe.

With bark full of the crystalline substance betulin, silver birches are full of pale light. No wonder its Sanskrit name is bhrag, meaning shining. The long, pliable branches were once used to whip those needing punishment. In ancient Rome, those in power would show off their influence by carrying a bundle of birch branches. These were known as fasces which lead to the term fascist as the branches were used to beat the non compliant into shape.

Foraging Fact #1:

Silver birch twigs can be boiled in water to create wintergreen flavoured tea (the flavour of root beer).

Wild Cherry (*Prunus Abium*)



Appearance: A deciduous, small trunked tree with a rounded crown.

Bark: Red-brown, smooth and glossy at first, peeling horizontally in strips.

Leaves: Elliptic to oblong, alternate, sharply toothed and tapering to a short point at the tip. They are bronze when young, maturing to mat dark green, and turn yellow or red in autumn.

Flowers: White and clustered in groups of 2-6 Fruit: Round cherries that ripe to a glossy black-red colour.

In Japan the cherry tree is a symbol of renewal, adopted by those remembering the Nagasaki and Hiroshima tragedies. Traditionally, when the trees come into blossom people would take time off work to enjoy them. It is a time of contemplation and reflection. This is a tradition that should be practised everywhere cherry trees exist. If we too, in Britain, took time out of our busy lives to revel in nature's fleeting spectacles we could better appreciate the preciousness of time. Slow down and try to think of your lives by the amount of cherry blossoms you have seen.

Foraging Fact #2:

The sap formed from a scar in a cherry tree trunk can be chewed like chewing gum. This can be infused with wintergreen flavour by placing it over a pan containing boiling water and silver birch twigs.

Crab apple (Malus Sp.)



Appearance: A spreading, deciduous tree with sometimes spiky shoots.

Bark: Brown, cracked and fissured with age.

Leaves: Oval to nearly rounded, finely toothed margins and short-pointed tips. They are dark green above, paler below, and smooth or nearly so on both sides when mature.

Flowers: White or pink tinged and borne in clusters.

Fruit: Small, yellow-green or red-flushed apples.

A truly religious tree, the apple is deeply rooted in Christianity. The biblical fruit given to Adam by Eve was translated from the Hebrew Tappach, meaning fruit, to an apple because they were common to Western translators. Ever since, the apple has represented humanity's exploration of morality. The apple's genus is Malus, meaning evil. You could say that this evilness has penetrated into the core of the fruit, manifesting itself as the poison cyanide within the apple pips. Apple orchards were also extremely common in Christian Monasteries. Monks would practise grafting which was forbidden by the Jewish religion. The Church, however, encouraged the practice as it symbolised attaching new members onto the tree of Christ. This further strengthened the relationship between Christianity and the apple. The apples world of divinity then infiltrated our everyday language, in phrases like 'rotten apple', 'good to the core' and 'apple of our eye.' All these terms reveal the ethics and quality a person.

Did you know?

The relationships associated with the Crab Apple and Rowan trees have been formed from mankind's exploration of morality. More specifically they have been used to explore what makes a person evil and how we can protect ourselves from that evil.

Rowan/Mountain Ash (*Sorbus Aucuparia*)



Appearance: A deciduous tree that is often multi-stemmed with a loose, rounded crown.

Bark: Glossy, grey and smooth, becoming rigid with age.

Leaves: Alternate, pinnate with up to 15 sharply toothed, taper-pointed, dark green leaflets, which are blue-green beneath.

Flowers: Large clusters of small white flowers.

Fruit: Red berries which are poisonous when raw.

The Rowan is the symbolic antithesis of the apple. It branched out from paganism, surrounded by folklore and myth. The apple tree may have been used to explore the origins of evil, but it is the rowan than can protect us from it. The word Rowan is believed to derive from the Norse word for charm. The tree has been used to overcome one of mankind's biggest problems - keeping away witches, goblins, fairy folk and the Evil Eye. These mischievous spirits are most active on May Day. If anyone feels like herding cattle on the 1st of May, then they should make sure they smack their cows with a rowan stick first. This is to stop witches stealing the butter from the cow's milk. For every other day of the year, it is a good idea to plant a rowan outside of your house. This way you will be protected from all manner of magical beings. At least the students living on the campus can sleep safe in the knowledge no Witch will steal their milk.

Did you know?

The Rowan is the sovereign protector of milk

Hawthorn (*Crataegus Monogyna*)



Appearance: A shrub or small tree with smooth, thorny shoots.

Bark: Orange-brown; cracked and scaly in old trees.

Leaves: Alternate with an oval to diamond-shaped in outline and broadly tapered based. They are deeply cut into three or five sharply toothed lobes and are glossy, dark green above and paler beneath.

Flowers: White with a distinctive pink anther, borne in dense clusters. Very fragrant.

Fruit: Bright red oval fruits containing a single stone.

Hawthorns are the homes of fairies. If you cut one down then expect to be cursed with extreme bad luck. The same fate will befall anyone bringing hawthorn flowers indoors. Yet it's not all bad. The young leaves of the hawthorn are edible and help lower cholesterol. Just don't go foraging on May Day, Midsummer Eve or Halloween because you'll run the risk of being carried away by the fairies that live in the tree.

Scots Pine (*Pinus Sylvestris*)



Appearance: An evergreen tree, with branches that grow in whorls. It is conical when young, developing a rounded, spreading head on a tall trunk with age.

Bark: Purple-grey, orange-pink towards top of trunk; deeply cracked, and fissured, flaking into small flakes with age.

Leaves: Stout, needle-like. Blue-green to blue-grey in colour.

Flowers: Male flower clusters are cylindrical and yellow, found at the base of young shoots. Female clusters are upright and red, and are scattered in ones or twos at the tips of the young shoots.

Fruit: The female flowers mature into egg shaped, woody green cones that are brown when ripe.

Not only are the seeds produced from Scots pine cones edible but the new shoots make a refreshing cup of tea. The brew's vapours can supposedly relieve bronchial congestion.

Making Pine Tea:

- Collect and clean the new shoots from the tree
- Chop in half to release the flavour
- Boil in water
- Enjoy

Small Leaved Lime (Tilia Cordata)



Appearance: A large, deciduous tree with a broadly columnar head.

Bark: Smooth and grey; furrowed with age.

Leaves: Rounded with a heart shape base. The end abruptly tapers to a point. They have a sharply toothed margin and are dark green above and blue-green beneath.

Flowers: Yellow-white, hanging in strongly scented clusters.

Fruit: Woody, rounded and grey-green.

If the exams are getting too much to handle then a tea made from fresh lime flowers may just help. The flowers contain tisane which is a mild sedative. Doctors in the Second World War would brew a strong tea in the field as a makeshift tranquiliser.

Making Lime Flower Tea:

- Collect flowers when in full bloom, just after they have opened
- They can be used fresh or dried in the sun for later use
- Boil in water
- Relax

English Oak /Common Oak (Quercus Robor)



English Oak (Quercus Robor)

Appearance: A deciduous tree with an irregular and spreading crown with smooth shoots.

Bark: Grey with vertical fissures.

Leaves: Alternate, widest above the middle, very short-stalked with 5-7 lobes on each side. They are dark green above and blue-green beneath.

Flowers: Borne in catkins: the males yellow-green and drooping; the females inconspicuous.

Fruit: Acorns

You may ask – what can an oak tree actually do? Well, the real question is what can't it do? But, for now let's just concentrate on the;

ENGLISH OAK'S TOP TEN USES:

1. It can protect you from lightning as it was once sacred to Thor, the Norse god of thunder
2. Standing under an oak or wearing one of its leaves can protect you from witchcraft
3. Slow down ageing by carrying an oak
4. Hammering a nail into an oak cures tooth ache
5. If you are the King of England (namely King Charles II) you can hide effectively inside an oak tree
6. An oak tree is a nice place to dally under with your Merry Men (if you have any)
7. Liquid from acorns can be distilled and given to the 'intemperate' to cure their craving for alcohol
8. Acorns can be roasted, finely chopped and eaten
9. Once roasted and chopped the acorns can be boiled and grounded into flour
10. An acorn coffee can be made by chopping up kernels, roasting them to a light-brown colour, grinding them up and roasting them again. If, by any chance, you had the time to make maple sugar from the silver maple at the beginning of the walk, you could be on your way to having a lovely Americano by now.