Clifton Playing Fields was opened in 1963 and forms part of a valuable wildlife corridor with Clifton Central Park.
It covers 20 hectares and was laid out primarily for sport and recreation, a role it keeps to this day.



Our common salix delight in meads and ditch-sides, rather dry, than over-wet (for they love not to wet their feet, and last the longer) If you plant for a kind of wood, or copp'ce, set them at six foot distance, or nearer, in the quincunx, and be careful to take away all suckers from them at three years end – John Evelyn (1664).



The trail starts at the path next to the tennis courts and follows a clockwise direction to tree number 16 next to the pavilion.
It then continues off track over the playing fields culminating in the south west corner of the park.

For more information on this and other tree trails, please contact Nottingham City Council's Parks and Open Spaces Service on; 0115 915 2733 or email; parksandopenspaces@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Tree Trail

Clifton Playing Fields



There are approximately 450 trees on Clifton Playing Fields.

This trail introduces a selection of some fascinating specimens to discover and enjoy.

Nottingham City Council Park Rangers

Nottingham
A city we're all proud of

1. Schmitt's Cherry (*Prunus* x *schmittii*)
A tall, fast-growing, hybrid cherry that produces pale pink, five-petalled, erect, star-shaped flowers from April to May. It is most remarkable for its polished, red-brown bark that improves with every passing year.

2. Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
Also known as the Mountain Ash, native to Britain and grows to 25m. Flowers form in creamy white heads in late spring amongst feathery leaves that pass through striking colour changes in autumn. Small red berries hang from the tree long after leaf fall providing good winter food for birds.

3. Golden Weeping Willow (*Salix* x *sepulcralis var. chrysocoma*)
Introduced here from Berlin around 1888, this is a hybrid of the Chinese Weeping Willow and the Golden Willow. Growing up to 24m, it is in leaf from March right through to December with its broad head of twisting limbs adorned by long, hanging shoots which are green, then (in sun) greyish gold for many years. Unusually, its catkins are both male and female. To the right of this tree is a Corkscrew Willow (*Salix babylonica* var. *pekinensis* 'Tortuosa'), a fast-growing, short-lived curiosity.

4. Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)
One of the most recognisable native trees in Britain. The striking white bark peels readily and has historically been used as a writing material. In early spring the sap can be collected to make Birch Sap Wine. Birch can live to be up to 100 years old and can grow to heights of 30m. It is often seen with masses of small branches that look like a bird's nest and is sometimes referred to as 'witches' broom'. It is known as the 'Lady of the Woods' because it sways gracefully in the wind.

5. Purple-leaved Plum (*Prunus cerasifera* 'Pissardii')
This variant of the green-leaved Cherry Plum or Myrobalan Plum was introduced from Iran around 1880. The first tree to flower here from late February, it has pretty white blossom soon followed by the dark foliage.

6. Purple Crab Apple (*Malus* x *moerlandsii* 'Profusion')
Introduced from Holland in 1938, this hybrid crab apple can typically grow to 10m and displays striking crimson flowers amidst purplish leaves in spring. Gradually the leaves mature to a shiny reddish-green colour and bright red fruits appear in autumn.

7. Japanese Crab (*Malus floribunda*)
Introduced to America and Europe in 1862 from Japan, but not known in the wild there and probably of hybrid origin. After coming into leaf very early, it is exceptionally floriferous in spring, with masses of white flowers from red buds, and produces tiny, pea-sized fruits by autumn.

8. Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*)
So called due to the leaves being white on the underside when they first open, this tree is native to central and southern Europe. It can grow to a height of 25m and produces edible red fruit, which can be made into jam, jelly and even wine in some parts of Europe. Its dense hard timber was once used to make wheels, cogs and tool handles. It has historically been referred to as the weather tree, for when the white underside of the leaves became visible, rain was believed to be on the way.

Acknowledgements: Graham Pearce.

9. Variegated Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus* f.*variegatum*)
A variant of our naturalised Sycamore, this cultivar 'Leopoldii' was produced in Belgium in 1864. The leaves show yellowish pink/purple splashes in spring.

10. Box Elder (*Acer negundo*)
Also called the Ash-leaved Maple and widely distributed in North America, where it is sometimes tapped for maple syrup, it has been cultivated in Britain since 1688. The wood is white, like Box, and the leaves have 3 to 5 or more leaflets, like Elder or Ash.

11. English Oak (*Quercus robur*)
The dominant big tree across much of Britain with heavy, spreading, twisting branches which make a broad crown. It has sessile leaves and stalked (pedunculate) acorns which distinguishes it from the Sessile Oak which has stalked leaves and stalkless (sessile) acorns. Oak supports a large variety of leaf-eating insects and is an extremely important building material and, for traditional timber-framed buildings, it is almost always the timber of choice.

12. Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus* 'Watereri')
A species native to northern Britain, this most commonly grown variety was raised in Surrey in 1914 and can reach 25m. The crown has an untidy appearance and the long white flower stalks developing in late spring can measure up to 25cm long. Ripe black cherries are bitter to our taste but are especially liked by birds, so soon disappear.

13. Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)
This is one of our most attractive native trees when in flower with masses of white blossom followed by edible fruits in mid-summer. The progenitor of many modern, cultivated cherry varieties, it can grow to 30m and typically live for up to 100 years. Natural regeneration is abundant from fallen and bird-dispersed seed as well as from root suckers. The red-brown wood is the preferred timber for cabinet makers and its fine grained quality also makes it perfect for making musical instruments, particularly woodwind.

14. Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus* x *yedoensis*)
Also known as the Tokyo Cherry, this hybrid is highly regarded and widely planted in its homeland of Japan, and around the world. It has grey-brown to dark-brown bark. The flowers wreathe the bare branches in early spring, palest pink and developing mauve centres as they age.

15. Lawson Cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*)
This tree is native to Oregon and California and was first introduced into the UK by Lawson's Nurseries, Edinburgh, around the mid-1800s. Since then it has been selectively bred in Europe to produce over 200 ornamental varieties, including many popular dwarf and coloured forms. This golden-coloured variety is just such a cultivar and is a striking addition to the trail, being easily spotted near to the sports barn.

16. Deodar (*Cedrus deodara*)
Introduced to Britain from the western Himalayas in 1831 and widely planted in parks and gardens where it can form a stately tree. Different from all other cedars in its drooping leader and longer, paler leaves, this broad, conical evergreen has a gently pendulous habit and soft, blue/green foliage. It produces pleasantly fragrant timber.

17. Manna Ash (*Fraxinus ornus*)
Also called the Flowering Ash because of the large, feathery masses of scented inflorescences that appear in spring, this tree is native to southern Europe and Asia Minor, and has been grown in Britain since the 17th century. The sap hardens on contact with air to yield a yellowish-white sweetening agent used in some herbal medicines.

18. Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*)
Widespread in Continental Europe and first recorded as growing in Britain in Scotland in 1683. The ridged bark and the leaves' pointed lobes help to distinguish it from the Sycamore. Flowers are a useful source of food for bees in spring. The yellowish-white timber is very hard and is used for joinery and furniture making.

19. Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
A well-known tree, introduced from the Balkans in the 1600s. It is a much loved tree in the UK for its chestnuts, commonly called 'conkers'. Sadly the tree has become susceptible to the present scourge of the Horse Chestnut Leaf-mining Moth which causes early leaf degeneration.

20. Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*)
The large, curvy bole of this mostly waterside willow stands out along the brook here. The brownish bark helps to identify it, as does its trademark brittle twigs and mostly hairless leaves. Leaf-galls caused by the Willow Bean-gall Sawfly cause little damage. Easily spotted here near the footbridge due to its foliage which cascades out onto the fields.

21. Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*)
This native species was once dominant throughout much of lowland Britain. It has sweet-smelling summer flowers that attract lots of insects looking for nectar. It produces large, winged fruits which are dispersed by the wind. Its wood properties make it one of the best for carving. It is one parent, with the Large-leaved Lime (*T. platyphyllos*), of the widely planted hybrid Common Lime (*T.* x *europaea*).

22. White Poplar (*Populus alba*)
Native to West and Central Eurasia and growing up to 28m, this tree is part of the Willow family. It has a tendency to take root in ground near rivers and floodplains as is the case here. New leaves are covered with white felty hairs and the light grey bark is pitted with diamond-shaped patches. The soft white wood has been used for floorboards in houses as it does not splinter or catch fire easily.

23. Common Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
Our native alder, generally frequent near water, where its roots provide aeration of soil and nitrogen-fixation. As well as the dark brown, persistent cones, the oval, indented leaf shape aids recognition. The timber is remarkably water-resistant and has had a wide range of uses, from clogs to the finest charcoal for gunpowder.

24. Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
The last native tree to come into leaf in spring and one of the first to lose its leaves in autumn, the ash tree can grow to 30m. It makes excellent firewood, green or seasoned, and is the best wood for various tools and sports items that require flexibility and strength. The characteristic winged seeds, called 'keys', are usually abundant on female trees. It is known as the 'Venus of the Woods' due to its beauty and grace.