

East Walk



TOWER HAMLETS

1 VICTORIA PARK TREE WALK

Opening times

The park is open every day except Christmas Day 7.00 am to dusk. Please be aware that closing times fluctuate with the seasons. The specific closing time for the day of your visit is listed on the park notice boards located at each entrance.

Toilets are opened daily, from 10.00 am until one hour before the park is closed.

Getting to the park

- Bus: 277 Grove Road, D6 Grove Road,
8 Old Ford Road
- Tube: Mile End, Bow Road, Bethnal Green
- DLR: Bow Church
- Rail: Hackney Wick (BR North London Line)



Victoria Park was London's first public 'park for the people'. Designed in 1841 by James Pennethorne, it covers 88 hectares and contains over 4,500 trees.

Trees are the largest living things on the planet and Victoria Park has a variety of interesting specimens, many of which are as old as the park itself. Whatever the season, as you stroll around take time to enjoy their splendour, whether it's the regimental design of the formal tree-lined avenues, the exotic trees from around the world or, indeed the evidence of the destruction caused by the great storm of 1987 that reminds us of the awesome power of nature.

The East Walk is one of three Victoria Park tree walks devised by Tower Hamlets Council. We hope you enjoy your visit, if you have any comments or questions about trees please contact the Arboricultural department on 020 7364 7104. For general parks enquiries please contact 020 7364 5000 or email: parks@towerhamlets.gov.uk

East Walk

Approximate time required: 55–75 minutes
Distance: approximately 1.9 miles

Take a walk around the largest section of the park and enjoy a selection of interesting trees. All the trees mentioned in this guide are labelled. Enjoy your walk.

Accessibility

This route is along even pathways and is accessible to users of wheelchairs and motorised scooters.





1 Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa bignonioides*)

Origin: South eastern North America

Height at maturity: 7.5–15m (25–50ft)

This ornamental is common in parks and gardens in Britain and central and southern Europe. Leaves and fruit look similar to the 'runner bean' but are not edible. The name Catalpa was used by the Cherokee Indians.

2 Weeping Willow (*Salix x chrysocoma*)

Origin: China

Height at maturity: 20m (60ft)

This hybrid is widely used in gardens and parks throughout Europe and North America. It is commonly found on the banks of lakes and rivers and its golden weeping foliage with catkin-like flowers are a splendid sight in the spring and summer months.

3 Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)

Origin: Eastern North America

Height at maturity: 27–36m (90–120ft)

This tree is best noted for its autumn colour and is widely used as an ornamental in Britain. Leaves are generally green with a silver underside, turning yellow/red in the autumn. Other distinctive features include the smooth grey bark and the brittle nature of the timber.

4

Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*)

Origin: Southern Europe, Asia minor

Height at maturity: 40m (130ft)

This normally upright tree naturalises quickly in woods and hedges. Distinctive features include long slender leaves, bark and woolly acorn cups. This specimen is of particular interest because of its unusual growth habit.

5

Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)

Origin: South eastern North America

Height at maturity: 45m (150ft)

This deciduous conifer lives in or near to water. Mature specimens grow roots with 'knees' which protrude above the water level and allow the tree to breathe. The bark is reddish brown and ridged or peeling. This tree is a popular ornamental and is often confused with the Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*).

6

Fig (*Ficus carica*)

Origin: West Asia

Height at maturity: 9m (30ft)

This popular tree has been cultivated in England since the 16th century. It produces sweet green, purple or brown fruits which ripen in October and are eaten raw, tinned, dried or sugared. Its leaves are large and prominent with 3 or 5 lobes.

7

Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

Origin: Europe

Height at maturity: 10.5m (35ft)

This tree has ancient associations with May-day festivities and superstitions. It produces fragrant flowers in May and red berries that ripen in September. Small thorns can be found on the stems and Hawthorns generally are well used by nesting birds.

8

False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)

Origin: Eastern & mid-western North America

Height at maturity: 25m (80ft)

Introduced between 1601 and 1610 this tree is sometimes called the Black Locust. It is often used as an ornamental and, being pollution-tolerant, is commonly found in city streets and parks. The bark is particularly distinctive, brown and deeply furrowed with a network of ridges. This particular specimen has been grafted, note the tell-tale joint on the trunk.

9

Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Origin: Albania, Northern Greece

Height at maturity: 30m (100ft)

Introduced in the early 17th century, the Horse Chestnut is common in European parks and gardens. This large-spreading tree produces stout candle-like white flowers in May and fruit in October which are normally collected by children to play 'conkers'. Leaves normally have seven broad stalkless leaflets. Horse Chestnuts are known for their yellow autumn colour and brittle timber.

10

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Origin: Central & southern Europe, west Asia

Height at maturity: 30m (100ft)

Cultivated both as a shelter tree and for its timber which is used to make many small items including violins and wooden spoons. The most common characteristic is the winged fruit which have an uncanny knack of growing in the most unlikely of places.



11

Persian Ironwood (*Parrotia persica*)**Origin:** Area south west of the Caspian Sea**Height at maturity:** 12m (40ft)

This interesting specimen can be a tree or a shrub and in the wild sometimes forms dense thickets. Cultivated in England from 1840, it is deciduous and sometimes referred to as the Iron Tree. Flowers open in February and March and the leaves vary in colour between brilliant red, orange and yellow. The bark is smooth and grey, breaking off in flakes to expose light green patches.

12

Evergreen/Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)**Origin:** Mediterranean region**Height at maturity:** 28m (90ft)

Common in parks, gardens and roadsides in Britain, this tree has been cultivated in England since the 16th century. It has a dense dark appearance due to its abundance of foliage and the hard, durable timber is used for joinery. The acorns fall in October in large numbers and are still used as a food source in many countries. Leaves are glossy green with a lighter underside.

13

Maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus 'Purpureum Spaethii'*)**Origin:** Cultivated**Height at maturity:** 20m (60ft)

This popular ornamental, noted for its decorative foliage, has leaves that are purple on the underside.

14

False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)**Origin:** Appalachian Mountains**Height at maturity:** 25m (80ft)

A good example of a twin stemmed specimen. See No. 8 for more details.

15

Caucasian Wing Nut (*Pterocarya fraxinifolia*)**Origin:** Caucasian mountains of Europe & Iran**Height at maturity:** 30m (100ft)

This deciduous tree is noted for its winged nuts (hence its curious name). A handsome species often developing more than one trunk and quite suitable for streets, but does not do well in areas where winter temperatures fall below -12°C (10°F) for prolonged periods.

16

Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa bignonioides*)**Origin:** South eastern North America**Height at maturity:** 7.5–15m (25–50ft)

An excellent example of how this tree can be used as an ornamental planting. See No. 1 for more details.

17

Maple (*Acer platanoides 'Leopoldii'*)**Origin:** Cultivated**Height at maturity:** 20m (60ft)

Another popular ornamental tree mainly used for its attractive yellow and green foliage.

18

Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)**Origin:** Northern China**Height at maturity:** 30m (100ft)

This tree was introduced from northern China in 1751. Few trees thrive in towns better than Ailanthus but it is not particularly long-lived.

19

Caucasian Elm (*Zelkova carpinifolia*)**Origin:** Caucasian mountains of Europe**Height at maturity:** 35m (116ft)

This attractive tree can be found in many European parks and gardens. Branches are angular and dense and the leaves are coarse and dark green. The bark is smooth and sometimes splits into scales to show exposed orange bark beneath.

20

Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra 'Italica'*)**Origin:** Northern Italy**Height at maturity:** 30m (100ft)

This tall conical shaped tree is propagated by cuttings. The resultant 'clones' can be traced back to the town of Lombardy in northern Italy. Widely used as an ornamental feature but more commonly used for shelter against wind when planted in closely spaced rows.

21

Chinese Privet 'White Wax Tree'*(Ligustrum lucidum)***Origin:** South east Asia, North Africa, Australia**Height at maturity:** 15m (50ft)

A member of the privet family, this specimen is one of fifty species which can take the form of shrubs or small trees. This fine example has attractive bark and dark glossy foliage.

22

Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)**Origin:** California & western Sierra Nevada**Height at maturity:** 30m + (100ft +)

Although never as tall as the 'Redwood', in its native state it attains a greater girth and the 'General Sherman' tree is generally acknowledged to be the world's largest living thing. Specimens of 30m and above are not uncommon in the British Isles. The Wellingtonia is regarded as one of the oldest living things in the world.

The oldest authenticated age of a felled tree is about 3,100 years, whilst several standing trees appear to be about 1,500 to 2,000 years old.

These two specimens were planted in 1994 and it is hoped that one day they will break records of their own.

