

*A first description of an  
urban arboretum. Notes  
on 50 major trees and  
those in the historic  
squares identified.*

# TREES

*of Trinity College  
Dublin*



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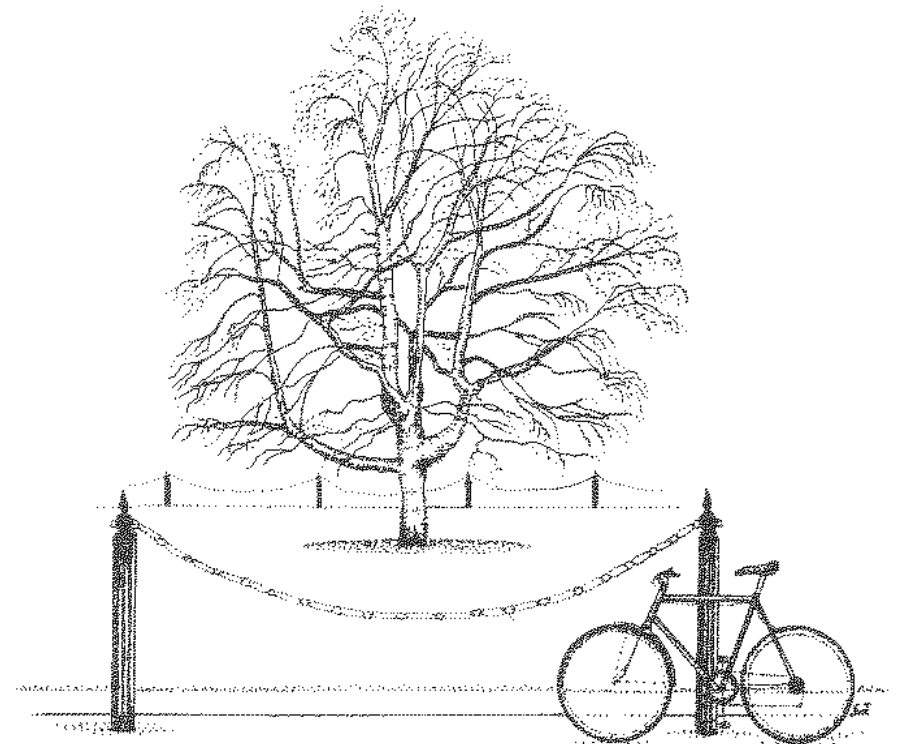
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## Preface

There are between 500 - 600 trees on the 40 acre campus of Trinity College. The exact number varies as specimens are lost and others planted. Many new trees have been established in conjunction with new buildings at the east end. They survive in a poor, rather dry soil, containing the debris of at least 400 years of occupation. Their air is polluted and the effects of buildings and paving are not usually benign.

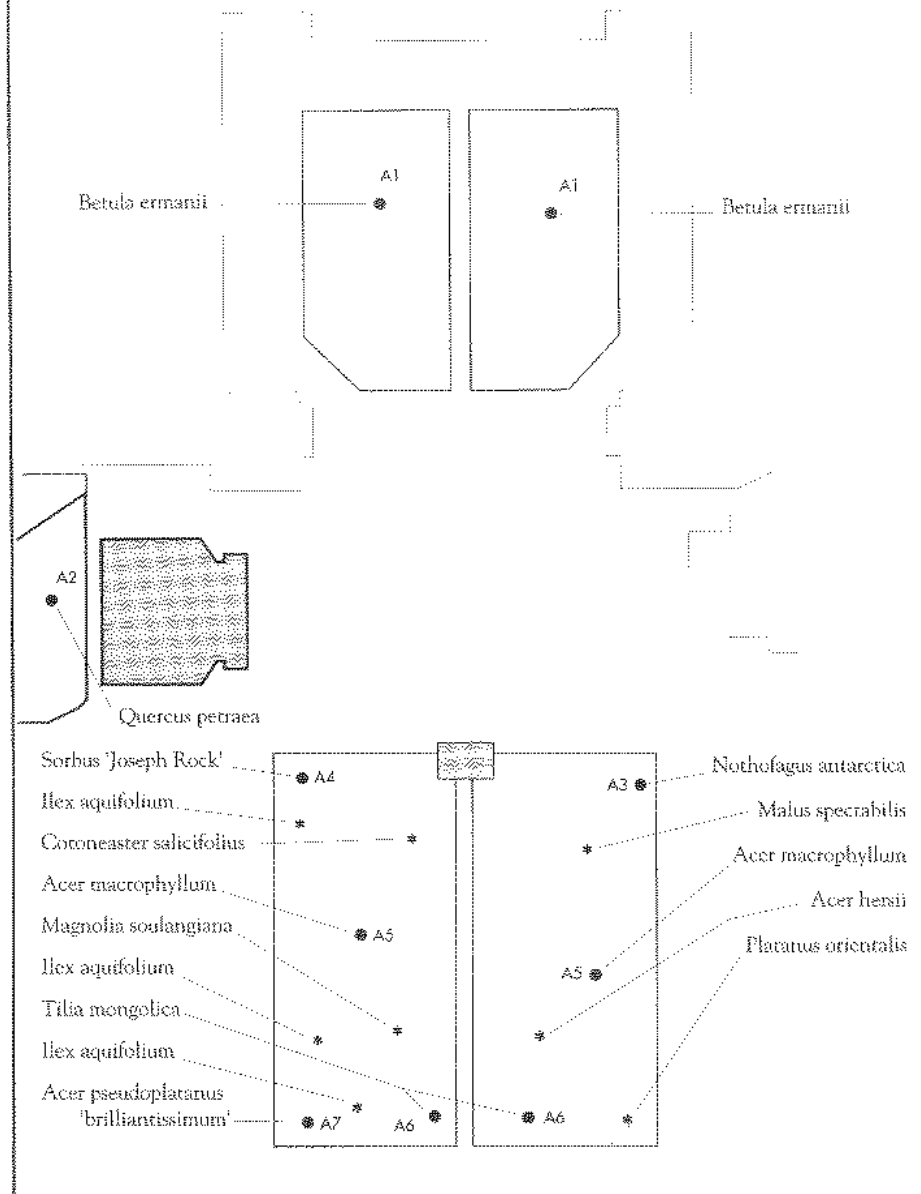
The selection of trees has been a complex process, combining the taste of distinguished consultants, the erudition of botanists, the pragmatism of gardeners, pure chance and serendipity. This leaves the College in 1993 with an eclectic urban arboretum which complements the buildings and adds greatly to the comfort and pleasure of all.

In this brief guide, notes written by Professor D.A. Webb on 50 specimens, can accompany you on three circuits of College. In addition all the trees of the major squares are named.

We hope this will serve the needs of most visitors and members of College.

Dr. David Jeffrey, Editor.  
*Chairman, Grounds & Gardens Committee*  
*Director, College Botanic Garden*

## Circuit A — Front and Library Square



## Circuit A - Front & Library Square

### A1. *Betula ermanii*,

Erman's birch. The identity of the birch-trees in the Front Square remains uncertain. In leaf and catkin they closely resemble *Betula ermanii*, a native of eastern Siberia and Japan, but the bark is different. They may well be hybrids, which arose in cultivation. They were planted in 1948 at the instance of provost Alton, to replace two Oregon maples (similar in age and size to those in the Library Square). One of these was destroyed by a freak storm in June, 1945; and after prolonged argument it was decided to remove the other for the sake of symmetry.

### A2. *Quercus petraea*,

Irish Oak. This sapling was planted on 13th March 1992, the 400th anniversary of Trinity College Charter Day. It was planted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alderman Sean Kenny to commemorate the granting of lands from the City of Dublin to the University. This specimen adds to the existing collection of oak species, which already includes the other native species, *Q. robur*.

### A3. *Nothofagus antarctica*,

the antarctic beech. There are no truly antarctic trees, but this species thrives in southern Chile and Argentina right down to Cape Horn. The genus to which it belongs is related to the true beeches, but differs in details of its flowers and fruit, and is confined to the southern hemisphere. While some species are evergreen, *N. antarctica* is deciduous and has neat leaves with only 4 pairs of veins. Planted c. 1956.

A4. *Sorbus 'Joseph Rock'*,

**Rock's rowan.** Trees bearing this name are something of a mystery and are thought to derive from seeds brought back from Yunnan in 1934 by Joseph Rock, but this is by no means certain. It is probably a hybrid, as it does not come completely true from seed, but many different parents have been suggested. It is distinguished by its rather narrow, erect crown, its primrose-yellow fruits, and in most specimens by its brilliant autumn red colour. Planted c. 1982.

A5. *Acer macrophyllum*,

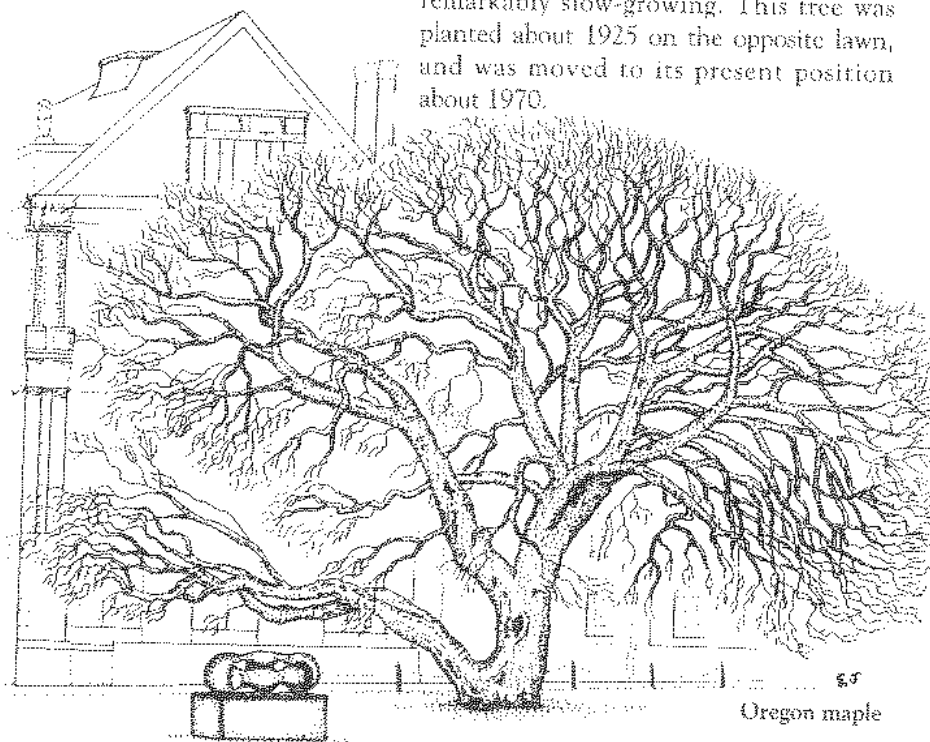
**the Oregon maple.** Native from British Columbia to northern California, this species is easily distinguished by its leaves, which are larger than those of any other maple. It comes into leaf early, and flowers profusely at about the same time, with catkin-like, hanging trusses of greenish yellow flowers. This is the largest known specimen in the British Isles, and possibly in Europe. The date of planting is not known, but is probably before 1850, as specimens 40ft high were reported in 1908. It is conceivable that this specimen, and its companion, arose from the first consignment of seed brought back by David Douglas in 1827. These are possibly the oldest trees in College. Seed germinates well, and there are several younger specimens elsewhere.

A6. *Tilia mongolica*,

**the Mongolian lime.** The species of lime from China and adjacent regions differ from the European species in having lobed or coarsely toothed leaves often with a margin set with long, bristly hairs. This species, from north-eastern China and Mongolia, has rather small, coarsely toothed or lobed leaves that look like those of a maple. It flowers freely in July. Planted c. 1973.

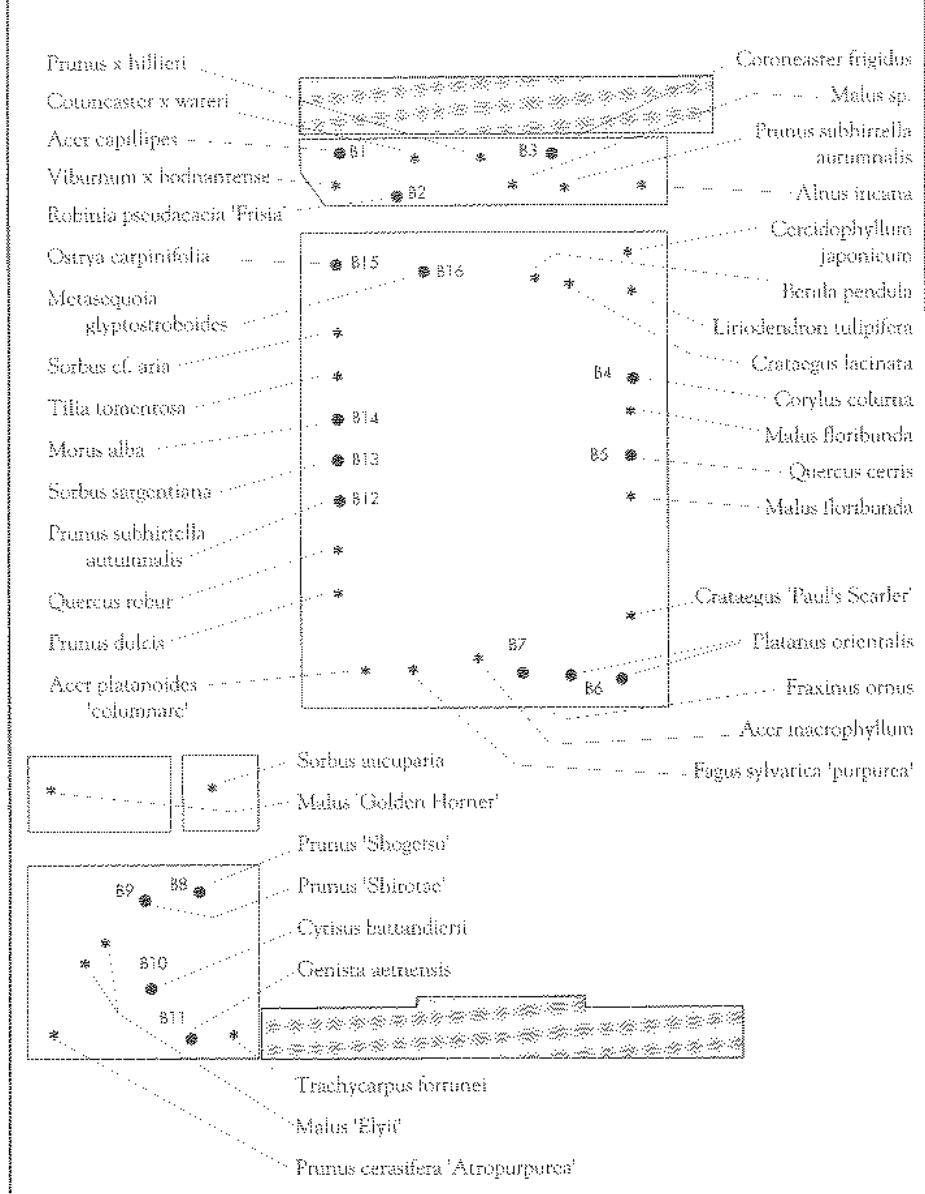
A7. *Acer pseudoplatanus*

**'Brilliantissimum'.** A variety of the ordinary sycamore, which apparently arose in England about 1900. Its leaves are bright salmon-pink on first emergence, and fade gradually through pale orange and yellow to green during the early summer. It is remarkably slow-growing. This tree was planted about 1925 on the opposite lawn, and was moved to its present position about 1970.



Oregon maple

## Circuit B — New Square



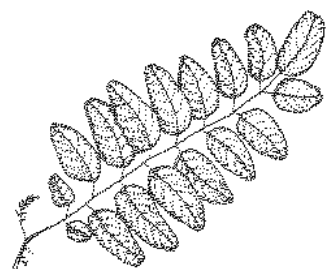
## Circuit B - New Square

B1. *Acer capillipes*,

the Japanese snakebark maple. A group of maples, found both in the Far East and in North America, are distinguished as 'snakebarks' on account of the conspicuous pattern of white streaks on their young trunk and branches. The Japanese snakebark maple can grow to 13 m, but this specimen lost its leader at an early stage, and will always remain of low, spreading habit. It has abundant yellowish flowers in late spring, followed later by red fruits of the usual maple shape. Planted c. 1971.

B2. *Robinia pseudacacia*  
'Frisia',

the golden locust-tree. The locust tree or false acacia (often wrongly called 'acacia' by gardeners) is native to eastern and mid-western United States and was introduced to Europe nearly 300 years ago. It has become widely naturalized by its abundant root-suckers; indeed, it has become something of a pest in France and Italy. The garden variety 'Frisia', however, which turned up in a Dutch nursery in 1935, is not invasive, and forms a very decorative tree, thanks to its graceful, feathery foliage, which remains a bright golden yellow throughout the summer. Planted c. 1979.



Golden  
locust-tree

B3. *Cotoneaster frigidus*,

the tree cotoneaster. Native of the Himalaya. This is the only cotoneaster species which grows to tree size (up to 12 m). It has been in cultivation for over 150 years, but is now becoming rare, being replaced by its hybrids such as *C X watereri*, which make an equally good fruiting display, but are only shrubs. *C. frigidus* is deciduous, but does not shed most leaves till Christmas, and its fine display of red berries usually lasts till spring. Only in hard winters when food is very scarce are the fruits eaten by pigeons and blackbirds. Planted c. 1930.

B4. *Corylus colurna*,

the Turkish hazel. A native to Turkey and the Balkans; in Central Europe this has grown to a height of 30 m and forms a shapely and stately tree. It is very similar to our own hazel in leaf, catkins and nuts, but differs in forming a tree with well-defined trunk, rather than a shrub. Planted 1985.

B5. *Quercus cerris*,

the Turkey oak. Native of southern and central Europe. This species can be recognized by its narrow leaves with deep but somewhat pointed lobes and its 'acorn-cups' fringed with long, slender lobes. It forms as fine a tree as either of the native oaks of the British Isles, and grows faster than either. It would probably be planted more widely but for the fact that its timber is of poor quality and not durable. It can grow to a height of at least 35 m. Planted 1969.

B6. *Platanus orientalis*,

the oriental plane. Native from Greece and eastwards through most of the Near and Middle East. The more familiar London plane is now usually reckoned to be a variety of this species. It is the tree apostrophized in Handel's well-known 'Largo' (*Ombra mai fu*) from the opera *Xerxes* as the Persian army is said to have encamped under a large plane on the Bosphorus before crossing to invade Greece. Our specimen and its neighbour are unusual for their wide, bottle-like trunks; no satisfactory explanation of this is known. The date of planting is unknown; but is likely to be between 1840 and 1870.



B7. *Fraxinus ornus*,

the flowering, or manna ash. A native of southern Europe; it can grow to height of 20 m. The common ash has inconspicuous greenish flowers, which appear before the leaves whereas in the manna ash the flowers have white petals, and appear after the leaves, in late May. It does not flower every year, but when it does it makes a fine show. This tree has been for some years infected with a bracket-fungus, to which it will eventually succumb, but it still looks quite healthy. The date of planting is unknown; perhaps about 1900.

B8. *Prunus*,

'Shogetsu' (P. 'Longipes'). One of the ornamental cherries which have long been cultivated in Japan; they are hybrids of unknown parentage, though mostly involving *P. serrulata*. This is one of the most beautiful, with widely-spreading habit and large semi-double flowers, pale pink in bud, later pure white, hanging from long stalks. Planted c. 1975.

B9. *Prunus*,

'Shirotae'. A hybrid Japanese cherry, also known as 'Mount Fuji'; in many respects similar to *P.* 'Shogetsu'. Is not so strong a grower and its flowers which appear 2-3 weeks earlier (early - mid April) are pure white, even in bud. Planted c. 1975.

B10. *Cytisus battandieri*,

the Moroccan broom. Native to North Africa. This is really a shrub, rather than a tree but is of sufficient interest to be included here. Its leaves are unusually large for a broom, and are covered throughout the summer with soft, silky, silvery hairs. The erect spikes of bright yellow flowers open in June and are strongly scented. The scent is compared by some with pineapple, by others with banana, but in fact they smell of a good fruit salad. Planted c. 1968.

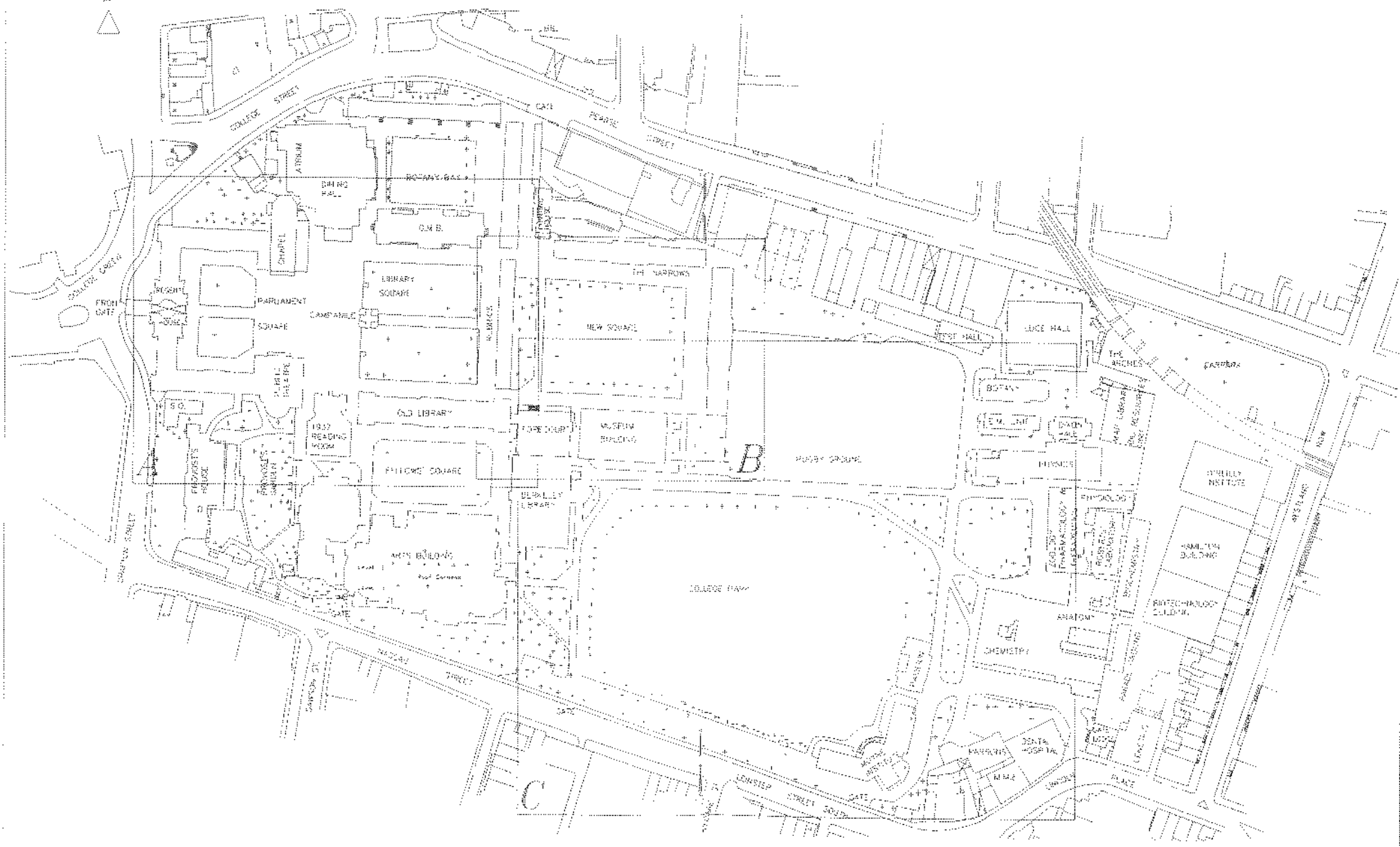
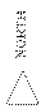


Moroccan broom

B11. *Genista aetnensis*,

the Mt. Etna broom. Native to Sicily and Sardinia, and one of the few plants to be seen on the more recent lava-flows of Mt. Etna. The tallest of the brooms, and the only species occasionally taking on the form of a tree, up to a height of 8-9 m. Its leaves are few and small, but its numerous slender, bright green branches give it something of the quality of an evergreen. An abundance of bright yellow flowers appear in July, when flowering shrubs are rather scarce. Planted c. 1984.

# MAP OF TRINITY COLLEGE 1993



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B12. *Prunus subhirtella*  
'autumnalis',

**the autumn cherry.** The wild species of this variant is a native to Japan. It flowers in late November and early December, and then again in March. It has pale pink, semi-double flowers, and differs from most Japanese cherries in its slender, flexuous twigs. Although now common, it was seldom seen in Ireland before 1925. It took the fancy of Provost E.J. Gwynn, who planted this and a number of other trees in the College grounds in 1928.

B13. *Sorbus sargentiana*,

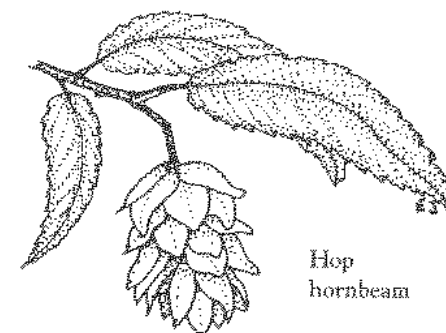
**Sargent's rowan.** Native of western China. It was introduced to the Arnold Arboretum near, Boston, U.S.A., in 1910, and named after the then director. It is a very distinctive species, with large leaflets, stout twigs, and big sticky buds like those of the horse-chestnut. The leaves are bronze on unfolding and turn red in autumn, while the large fruits are orange. Planted c. 1960.

B14. *Morus alba*,

**the white mulberry.** Native of China, but long cultivated in southern Europe, where it is sometimes seen as a street tree. It has a more erect habit than the common mulberry, and can grow to a height of 13 m; differing also in the smoother leaves and its pale pink fruit. Though sweet, this is insipid and scarcely worth eating. The leaves form the food of silkworms. Planted c. 1983.

B15. *Ostrya carpinifolia*,

**the hop hornbeam.** Native of southern Europe and the Caucasus, this is a fairly small tree (up to 15 m) which is closely related to the true hornbeam. It is indeed not very easy to tell the leaves apart, but fruits of *Ostrya* are easily recognised. They form compact, pale green catkins looking rather like a hop, with each nutlet enclosed in a flat, membranous, bladder-like covering. Planted c. 1970.

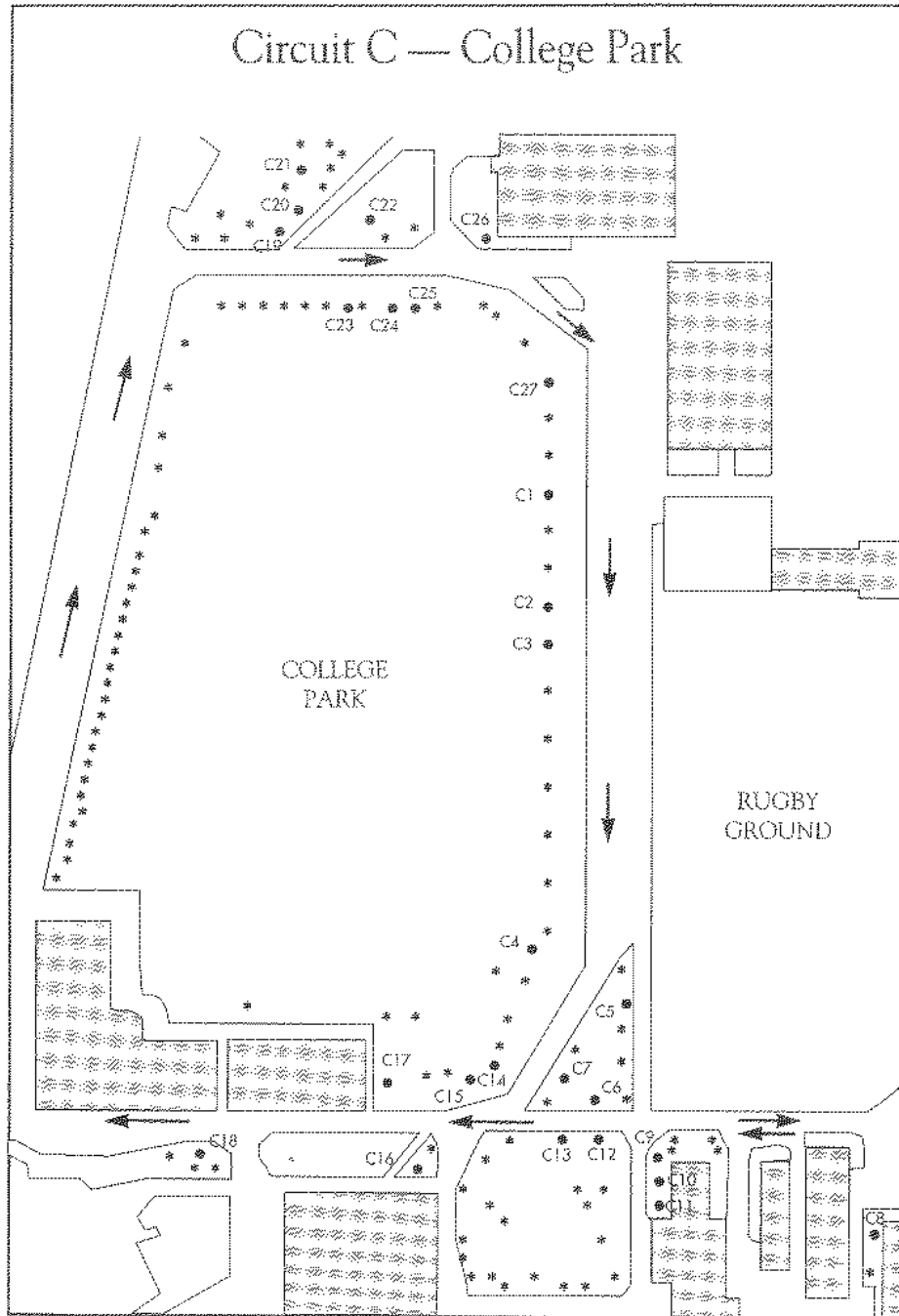


Hop  
hornbeam

B16. *Metasequoia*  
*glyptostroboides*,

**the dawn cypress.** Discovered in south-western China in 1941. This is a 'living fossil', though not of such long established lineage as the maidenhair-tree. Cultivated first in the U.S.A., it changed hands at a very high price until it was realized that it grew easily from cuttings. It is one of the few deciduous conifers. The foliage is soft and bright green, turning various shades of dull orange or salmon-pink in autumn. In China it can grow to a height of 35 m; the tallest so far recorded in England is 20 m, but that represents only some forty-five years' growth. It is quite frost-hardy, but likes a warmer summer than Dublin can provide. Planted 1986.

## Circuit C — College Park



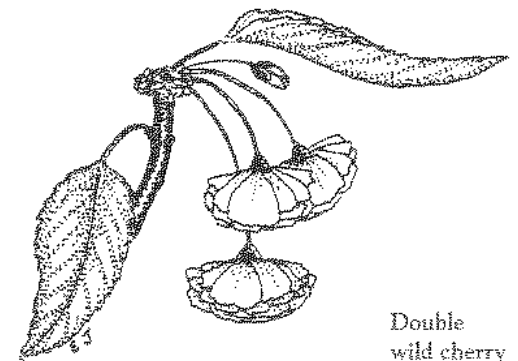
## Circuit C - College Park

- C1. *Alnus glutinosa*  
'Laciniata',

the cut-leaved alder. The common alder, usually found in damp places, is common through most of Europe, including Ireland, but its broad, rather clumsy leaves do not commend its use for ornamental purposes. This variant, however, which apparently arose near Paris about 1800, has more attractive, much more delicate foliage. Like the wild form it produces female catkins which resemble pine-cones in miniature, and remain on the tree for some time after the seeds have been shed. Planted 1984.

- C2. *Prunus avium* 'Plena',

the double wild cherry. The wild (single-flowered) form is native to Ireland and it is the ancestor of the sweet dessert cherries. This tree impresses by the purity of its white, many-petalled flowers, which last for about three weeks. It comes into flower when most of the Japanese cherries are over (usually about the first of May). Planted 1983.



Double  
wild cherry

C3. *Ulmus glabra*,  
the wych-elm. One of the two survivors from the 'Dutch elm disease' which killed sixty elms in Trinity College during the nineteen-seventies. The wych-elm is the only species native to Ireland, and is reputed to be slightly less susceptible to the disease than the common English species. The disease is caused by a fungus, which is spread by a beetle. The leaves have a rough surface, and are strikingly asymmetrical at the base. The small, greenish flowers come out before the leaves. This tree is probably about 100 years old.

C4. *Quercus frainetto*,  
the Hungarian oak. Native of south-eastern Europe, from Italy to Greece and Romania. It is easily recognized by the large, deeply lobed leaves, with usually 8-10 lobes on each side, that are usually downy on the lower side. The branches are usually swept upwards, giving a regular, ovoid crown. It can reach a height of 30 m. Planted c. 1983.

C5. *Fagus sylvatica*  
'*asplenifolia*',  
the fern-leafed beech. A variant of the common beech, differing only in its leaves, which are either very slender, or variously cut into narrow lobes. It grows almost to the size of an ordinary beech, and is very graceful when in full leaf. Occasionally a branch 'reverts' and produces leaves of the ordinary shape: such branches have to be cut out. Planted 1984.

C6. *Ginkgo biloba*,  
the maidenhair tree. Native to remote regions of N. China. The best example among trees of a 'living fossil', this species is the sole survivor of a group, distantly related to the conifers, which was abundant many millions of years ago. It has been cultivated for centuries in Buddhist temple gardens in China and it grows to a height of 25-30 m, but slowly especially as in this tree, on poor soil. It owes its English name to the leaves, which are in shape like the leaves of the maidenhair fern. It comes into leaf very late (early June). Planted c. 1956.

C7. *Tilia tomentosa*,  
the silver lime. Native of south-eastern Europe and Asia Minor. Perhaps the most handsome of the limes, especially on a windy day, when the white undersides of the leaves show up. It flowers nearly a month later than the common lime (late July and early August) and the nectar is said to be narcotic to bees, which may be found in a drunken stupor below it on hot summer evenings. Planted c. 1975.

C8. *Sorbus commixta*,  
the Japanese rowan. It is found wild in Japan, Korea and Sakhalin. A handsome small tree, up to 15 m high, similar in many respects to our native rowan, but easily distinguished by its more delicate foliage, with narrower, more numerous leaflets, its smaller fruits and narrow, pointed, orange-red winter buds. Like our native rowan, it sometimes produces brilliant autumn colour, but not every year. Planted c. 1984.

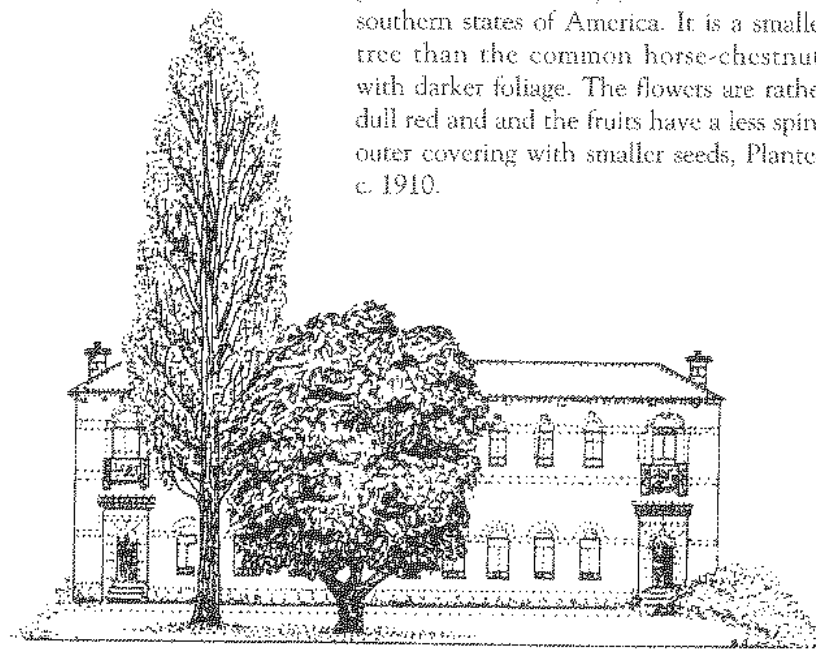
C9. *Sophora tetraptera*, the Kowhai. Native of the warmer parts of New Zealand, this graceful tree does well in Ireland if given shelter from cold winds. It produces a profusion of handsome yellow flowers in May, which are sometimes followed by long necklace-like fruits. It can grow to 12 m in its native country, but 8 m seems to be the limit here. Planted c. 1953.

C10. *Cordyline australis*, the cabbage-tree. Native of New Zealand and widely mistaken for a palm. It differs from the true palms in its undivided, strap-like leaves, and its habit of branching as soon as it has reached a certain age. It cannot stand severe frost, and is therefore usually seen near the coast in Ireland. Its stem has a consistency like that of rope; it does not form true timber. Mature trees produce a large panicle of small white flowers in early summer each year, followed by small, green berries. Planted about 1910.

C11. *Trachycarpus excelsa*, the Chusan palm. Native of China, and a true palm (one of the two species hardy in Ireland). Unlike the *Cordyline* its stem is unbranched, and its fan-like leaves are divided into narrow lobes folded down the middle. It can withstand frosts, but it needs a warm spot if it is to thrive. In Ireland it grows to a height of about 9 m, and produces a large panicle of yellow flowers in most years. Planted about 1910.

C12. *Populus nigra 'italica'*, the Lombardy poplar. This is at present the tallest tree in the College; it is about 30m high. It was introduced to northern Europe from Italy in the eighteenth century. The Lombardy poplar is widely planted, especially as a roadside tree, as it requires no pruning; it has the disadvantage of casting little shade. Only the male form is known, and it is reproduced by cuttings. It is said not to be a long-lived tree, although this specimen, planted about 1910, seems to be in perfect health.

C13. *Aesculus X carnea*, the red horse-chestnut. A true-breeding hybrid between the common horse-chestnut, *Aesculus hippocastanum*, and *A. pavia*, the red buckeye, a shrub from the southern states of America. It is a smaller tree than the common horse-chestnut, with darker foliage. The flowers are rather dull red and the fruits have a less spiny outer covering with smaller seeds. Planted c. 1910.



C14. *Fraxinus excelsior*,

the common ash. One of the commonest hedgerow trees in Ireland, especially on limestone soils, but comparatively seldom seen in woods. It is easily known by its grey bark, black buds and compound leaves, which are borne in opposite pairs. It is usually the last of our native trees to come into leaf. A full-grown tree (up to 45 m) is impressive, but it is seldom allowed to reach this size. Its wood is light, tough and springy; and is valued for many purposes, especially for handles of spades and axes, and also for making hurleys. This tree was planted near the pavilion in 1984, to mark the centenary of the foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association.

C15. *Tilia americana*,

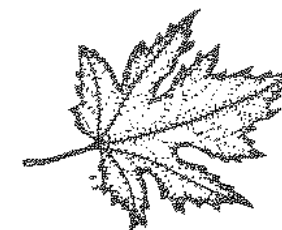
the American lime. A large tree. Native to eastern and central parts of Canada and the United States. It may be known from other limes by its large leaves (often up to 20 cm long and wide), which are free from hairs on the lower side except for minute tufts in the forks of the veins. It is not common in cultivation. Planted 1984.

C16. *Prunus serrulata*

'Autumn Glory'. The Japanese cherries in cultivation are, for the most part hybrids of obscure origin, mostly involving *Prunus serrulata*. They are mostly grown for the beauty of their flowers, but some, like this, are equally valuable for autumn colour. This tree is usually a sheet of vivid scarlet in late September. Planted c. 1971.

C17. *Acer saccharinum*,

the silver maple. A medium-sized tree from eastern North America. Recognized by its slender, flexible branches and its deeply lobed leaves, which are white underneath in spring and early summer. It is confused in nurseries with *Acer saccharum*, the sugar maple, which is rarely seen in Ireland. Planted c. 1980.

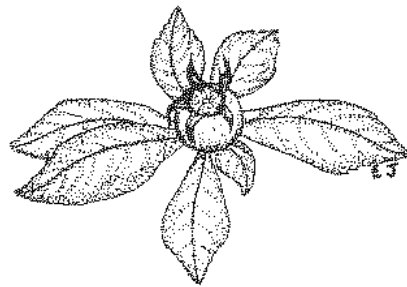


C18. *Tilia X europaea*,

the common lime. A hybrid of unknown origin between the two limes native to Britain (but not Ireland), *T. cordata* and *T. platyphyllos*. It can grow to height of over 30 m. and it has long been a favourite for parks and avenues. The flowers, which appear in midsummer, are fragrant and a good source of honey. Its chief drawback is its attraction to aphids, which secrete a sticky 'honey-dew' which disfigures the foliage and any cars parked beneath. Planted c. 1910.

C19. *Mespilus germanica*,

the medlar. Native from Bulgaria to Iraq, but cultivated for many centuries in northern Europe. A small, bushy tree, spiny in the wild but not in cultivated forms. The flowers are like those of the apple, but the fruit is smaller, flattened-globose, brown and hard. The fruits ripen in the late autumn by 'bletting', much like a pear 'going off', and are then esteemed by some palates for making into jelly or for eating with port after dinner. Planted in 1986.



Medlar

C20. *Liriodendron tulipifera*,

the tulip tree. Native of eastern North America. Grows to a large size, but its brittle wood makes it liable to wind-damage. The flowers are only borne on mature trees and are tulip-shaped, pale green in colour, tinged with orange. The leaf is of characteristic shape, cut off square at the tip. The wood is pale coloured and is used for inlay in furniture. Planted 1986.

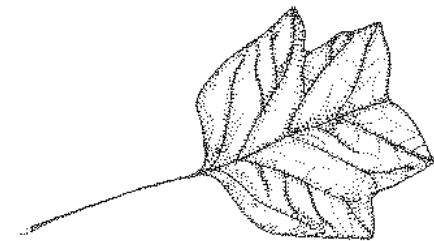
C21. *Aesculus indica*,

the Himalayan horse-chestnut. Native of the western Himalaya. Generally similar to the common horse-chestnut, but rather more elegant, if less stately. It flowers about six weeks later (at the end of June) and the young leaves are attractively tinged with bronze. Planted 1987.

C22. *Morus nigra*,

the mulberry. Believed to be native to central Asia but so long cultivated in Europe and Asia that its origin is uncertain. It sometimes forms a trunk up to 5 m. high, but is more often seen as a widely spreading, roundish bush. It begins to fruit at the age of 15-20 years. The fruit, which is best in pies and jams, should not be picked until it is almost black. The roundish leaves can be recognized by their rough, 'sandpaper-like' upper surface. They can be used as food for silkworms, but are not as good as those of its relative the white mulberry, *Morus alba*. Planted in 1986.

A very old mulberry-tree, probably dating from the seventeenth century, formerly grew in the Fellows' garden, but had to be sacrificed when the Arts building was built.



Tulip Tree





Wych elm in College Park

C23. *Ailanthus altissima*,

the tree of heaven. Native to northern China. A fast-growing tree, occasionally up to 25 m, but seldom very tall (the English name arises from the confusion with a taller, tropical species). Its leaves are rather like those of the ash, but are easily distinguished by being borne singly on the twigs instead of in opposite pairs. As the sexes are usually on separate trees fruit is seldom seen. It produces suckers freely from the roots, and by this means has become naturalized in much of Europe. Planted 1986.

C24. *Juglans regia*,

the common walnut. Native from south-eastern Europe to the Himalaya and central Asia; it forms a large tree of spreading habit, and is widely cultivated for its nuts and its timber which has a characteristic and ornamental grain. Edible nuts are produced fairly often in northern Europe, but they do not keep as well as those from further south. The young leaves have a pleasant fragrance when crushed. Planted 1983.

C25. *Castanea sativa*,

the Spanish or sweet chestnut. Native to southern Europe and south-western Asia, it has been cultivated elsewhere for many centuries. This is the edible chestnut, very different from the horse-chestnut, and not allied to it botanically. The only feature they have in common is a spiny covering to the seeds. It is a large tree, often with a very stout trunk, on which the pattern often shows a spiral twist. It grows well in Ireland, but only produces nuts worth eating after a hot summer. Its timber resembles that of oak. Planted 1983.

C26. *Aesculus hippocastanum*,

the common horse-chestnut. Its native country was for long uncertain, but is now known to be Albania and northern Greece, where it grows in remote valleys among the mountains. A large tree with widely spreading branches, it is too familiar to need detailed description and it is widely planted throughout Europe. It was only introduced to Britain about 1620; but this does not prevent it featuring in almost every film on Tudor England. Its timber is of little value. Planted c. 1920.

Another specimen stands in the Nassau Street entrance surrounded by a concrete bridge. It contributes greatly to the architecture of the entrance and the view from Dawson Street.

C27. *Acer platanoides*,

the Norway maple. The name is misleading; although it grows in southern Norway it is found almost throughout Europe (though not as a native in Britain and Ireland). It is like the sycamore, but more elegant, with more showy flowers in spring and sharply pointed lobes to the leaves. Most trees show a good yellow colour in autumn. This particular tree belongs to the variety 'Crimson King', in which the young leaves are red. Planted c. 1950.