



## Tree and Shrubs for Gardens Trail/Blue Route

The aim of this guide is to identify trees and shrubs considered suitable for visitors' gardens. The plants selected have one or more aspects of interest which may be flowers, foliage, fruit or bark. All named plants are hardy throughout most of the UK. More detailed information relating to size, aspect and any special soil requirements can be found on the RHS website under Plant Finder which also details suppliers who may stock the plants.

Some trees and shrubs in this guide have been awarded the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) Award of Garden Merit (**AGM**) which is trialled and judged by horticultural experts.

This route will follow posts marked with a **Blue** band. They may be accompanied by red and yellow bands which mark the long and short tree trails and give a little more detail regarding the history of the arboretum. The labels of plants identified in this trail have a light blue band, at the base, to facilitate locating them.

From the entrance you will see **Blue (B) post 1**. Walk straight ahead towards **B post 2** and go left through the pines, taking the left fork which brings you on to the Glebe lawn. On the edge of the lawn to the left you will find Mahonia Charity (Oregon Grape), a prickly evergreen shrub with yellow flowers in Winter. Nearby is Cornus kousa (Chinese Dogwood), a deciduous woody shrub which has white bracts in spring and good autumn colour. Opposite is an Acer griseum (Paperbark Maple) **AGM**, a deciduous tree with attractive peeling, papery chestnut brown bark and bright red autumn colour. Mid way between **B post 3** and **4** on the right is a Rhododendron yakushimanum **AGM**, an evergreen with silvery young foliage becoming dark green with a thick felted covering of fine hairs beneath. Pure white flowers open from bright pink buds in mid spring. Before reaching **B post 4** you will find Prunus Tai Haku (Great white Cherry) on your left with bronze foliage emerging in spring (later turning green) together with single white flowers up to 6cm across.

Walk across the lawn to **B post 4**, then turn right, continue straight ahead with the lake on your left. On the right, on the edge of the Silent Space, you will see Magnolia stellata (Star Magnolia) which has a broadly rounded habit and star shaped white flowers opening before the leaves emerge in the spring.

Continue straight ahead passing **B post 5 & 6** on your left. Before reaching **B post 7**, on the right, under the canopy of a group of mature Robinia pseudoacacias (False Acacias), is a group of Camellias, which, like Pieris and Rododendrons, prefer an acid to neutral soil, are evergreen and typically spring flowering. (However, the arboretum is home to an autumn/winter flowering variety, Camellia sasanqua, with white flowers which can be found on the edge of the Glebe lawn.) Camellias range in colour from red, varying shades of pink and white. A notable variety is Camellia japonica 'Leonard Messell' **AGM** which has large, round, semi double clear rose-pink flowers and prominent yellow stamens

Continue past **B post 7**, taking the left fork, passing the Hebe beds managed by the Hebe Society. Continue towards and pass **B post 8**. On the left is Parrotia persica 'Jodrell Bank' (Persian Ironwood). Parrotias are often wide and spreading and multi stemmed, making a small tree or large shrub and have good autumn colour. They have small, but abundant, red flowers in late winter/ early spring on bare twigs. Diagonally opposite on the right is Euonymus phellomanus (Corky Spindle) which is a large, deciduous shrub with corky, winged branches and striking 4 lobed pink fruits in the autumn. Just before reaching **B post 9** where the land slopes away from the path is a Rhus typhina 'Tiger Eyes' (Stag's Horn Sumach) so called because the naked branches resemble Stag's horns. This variety is compact with finely divided leaves and good autumn colour. Nearby is a Cotinus sp 'Grace' (smoke bush) with rounded, rich purple leaves turning reddish in autumn and large feathery deep pink plumes which from a distance can resemble smoke hence its name.

Continuing round the bend to the right to reach **B post 10** where the land slopes away from the path you will see some plants of Winter interest. There are different varieties of birch, a notable one being Betula utilis jacquemontii (West Himalayan or Kashmir Birch) with brilliant white bark and male catkins which are suspended from the tree in early spring. Lower down the slope there are varieties of Dogwoods grown for their colourful stems. If grown at the side of still water their reflection is an added bonus. A variety of note is Cornus Midwinter Fire with orange-red and yellow young shoots.

On the left between **B post 11 and 12** is Amelanchier grandiflora 'Ballerina'. The young leaves have a bronze tinge when emerging in the spring turning shades of orange, red or even purple in the autumn. It is a spring flowering small tree or large shrub with pretty white flowers. Go left, downhill to reach **B post 12** by the viewpoint across the Dane Valley. From the viewpoint go right, along the edge of the arboretum passing a line of Larix marschilinsii (Hybrid Larch), a deciduous conifer, on your left to **B post 13**. Continue past the gate to Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserve to **B post 14**.

Bear diagonally uphill passing a group of different Salix species (Willows) to reach **B post 15**. On the right is Crataegus persimilis 'Prunifolia' **AGM** an ornamental hawthorn with a broad crown and long thorns. The white flowers appear in spring, developing into deep red fruits in the autumn. Its leaves are glossy and dark green turning dramatic orange and red in the autumn. On the left is a flowering crab apple Malus x robusta 'Red Sentinal' with single white flowers in the spring followed by clusters of cherry – like glossy, deep red fruits which persist well into the winter. Flowering crab apples have white or pink blossoms developing in April or May followed by crab apples in a variety of colours and sizes. Some have purple foliage such as Malus Prairifire'. Further along, on the right, is the Malus Avenue with many good examples.

On reaching **B post 16**, turn right at the Great Avenue, the planting of which was completed by local school children in 1996 and now extends to nearly half a mile. Continue, passing a bench on your right and **B post 17** on your left. Turn right just before reaching **B post 18**. Continue straight ahead with the oak collection on your right and ash collection on your left. On the left, by **B post 19** is Liquidambar styraciflua 'Slender Silhouette' **AGM**, a broadly conical specimen tree, with dense, maple-like leaves colouring through orange to brilliant red in autumn.

Continue straight ahead, passing between a hawthorn hedge on your left and the plantation on your right, passing **B post 20** to reach **B post 21** and the main avenue. Turn left here heading in the direction of the exit. Continue to **B post 22**, positioned on your left, where you will find Acer davidii 'Karmen' (Snake barked Maple) with olive- green mature bark, strongly streaked white. Pendant clusters of small, yellow flowers are produced in spring, followed by winged seeds. Continue straight ahead, passing a bench on your right, to find Hydrangea paniculata 'Limelight' **AGM** on your left, a robust, upright deciduous shrub. Its flowers open lime green, later grading through to white with a pinkish tinge on maturity, turning brown and papery for the winter months. Nearby is Ilex x altaclerensis 'Lawsoniana' **AGM**, a compact female holly bearing broad, almost spineless dark green leaves splashed yellow in the centre and red berries in the autumn and winter.

Continue to **B post 23** by the Acer glade where you will find Acer palmatum 'Sango - kaku' **AGM** (Coral Barked Maple) a Japanese Maple with coral-red young branches and leaves opening pinkish-yellow, becoming green in summer and yellow in autumn. To the right of the exit you will see a row of young Daphnes, an evergreen or deciduous shrub. Two compact, evergreen varieties here are Daphne x transatlantica 'Eternal Fragrance' with scented pink flowers, flushed white, opening from deep pink buds and Daphne odora 'Aureomarginata' the Gold edged winter daphne with purplish – pink flowers, white within, flowering in early spring.

Kindly return this guide to its box by the noticeboard at the entrance.

**Thank you for visiting.**

