

Arnos Vale Tree Trail

A Nootka Cypress

Xanthocyparis nootkatensis

This cypress is native to western North America and was introduced in 1853. It has small yellow male flowers and small brown female flowers in March. The small cones have spiked scales – you may find them on the ground under the tree.

B Holm Oak

Quercus ilex

The holm oak arrived in the UK in the 16th century and comes from the Mediterranean. It gets its name from its holly-like leaves as holm means holly. They are not sharp like holly and are grey-green underneath, and young leaves are downy. It has dark tessellated (tiled) bark and produces cheery yellow catkins in June.

C Hornbeam

Carpinus betulus

This is a native* deciduous tree with leaves a bit like a beech, but with serrated edges. It has lovely sinewy grey and brown bark and in March produces catkins – male catkins are yellow, and females green. In the autumn, the leaves add a gorgeous yellow pop of colour to our landscape. The hornbeam was traditionally used to make charcoal, or moving parts of a piano.

D Sawara Cypress

Chamaecyparis pisifera

Introduced to the UK in 1861, this tree is native to Japan and is one of the sacred trees of old Japan. It has small brown male and female flowers in April, and little cones with pointed scales. The leaves (scales) have a resinous aroma when crushed.

E Irish Yew

Taxus baccata Fastigiata

This particular type of yew was discovered at Castle Fermanagh, County Fermanagh in the late 18th century. Every single Irish yew in the UK comes from this original Irish tree. This evergreen has flat scaly needles and upward growing, tight branches. You will find a number dotted along the Ceremonial way. BEWARE – yews are poisonous, apart from the fleshy red covering (aril) of the seed which is also poisonous. In March it has small yellow-scaled male flowers or tiny green female flowers.

F Norway Spruce

Picea abies

Native to Europe and introduced in the 16th century. Its timber, known as 'white wood' or 'deal', had many uses including roofing and paper pulp. In the UK it is our Christmas tree. The branches have 'pegs' at the base of the needle-like leaves. Reddish male flowers and pink female flowers occur in May and it produces 5-6" shiny brown cones.

G Sycamore

Acer pseudoplatanus

The sycamore tree was introduced to the UK in the 16th century from central and southern Europe. Despite being non-native*, it has become well embedded in British landscapes

and folklore. This distinctive maple tree with its smooth, light

brown bark has hand-shaped or palmate leaves which can have harmless black markings called 'tar-spot fungus'.

This fungus can be a sign of cleaner air as pollutants in the air can kill it! The winged V-shaped fruits of the tree that move so well in the wind are known by many as 'helicopters', as they spin when they fall. We have to carefully manage the sycamores on site as the saplings grow well in shade. This veteran sycamore is probably the source of many of the saplings that grow everywhere.

H Cedar of Lebanon

Cedrus libani

Native from Lebanon to Turkey, this tree was once widespread. But from biblical times it was extensively felled for building, and remaining trees are now protected on Mount Lebanon. Introduced in 1638, it has small pale green male flowers and brown female flowers which become 3-6" large purplish-green cones. The short needles are in clusters. In ancient Greece its oil was used for embalming.

I English Yew

Taxus baccata

Our native yew is well-loved and its large spreading branches and dark brown bark are a classic burial ground tree radiating solemnity. The yew has been planted in burial grounds for centuries and can live for thousands of years. Its poisonous nature was thought to remove diseases from the soil. The tree is evergreen and its lovely dark green flat needles are complemented by red berries, adding wonderful winter colour.

J English Oak

Quercus robur

This wonderful native tree probably pre-dates the cemetery. This oak was struck by lightning in the 1950s and it was suggested that it should be cut down. The cemetery superintendent at the time defended the tree, so we still have it today. Can you spot the scar low down where the lightning-damaged branch was removed? Oak trees can live up to 800 years. This one is a veteran oak which means it is old with a very wide trunk, stag's horn dead branches that can support wood-boring insects, and has all sorts of nooks and crannies for wildlife.

K Monkey Puzzle (Chile Pine)

Araucaria araucana

This tree gets its name from its tail-like branches, as when barrister Charles Austin saw it he declared, 'the tree would be a puzzle even for a monkey to climb'. The tree arrived in the UK in the 18th century when Scottish plant collector Archibald Menzies brought some of the seeds back from a Chilean banquet, germinating them on the voyage home on the ship *Discovery*. During the Victorian period this was a very fashionable tree. It has distinctive thick, spiny and quite sharp scale-like leaves. This female tree produces cones that are large, green and quite heavy. There is an old Fenland belief that planting a monkey puzzle on the edge of a graveyard would prevent the Devil from entering during a burial.

L Western Red Cedar

Thuja plicata

This pair of evergreens come from Western North America and have distinctive reddish ridged bark with trunks that grow from the base. They were probably planted when the Garden of Rest opened in the 1920s. The leaf is flat and shiny with a darker top and paler underneath and when crushed smells fruity. The trees produce small brown open cones in autumn.

M Austrian Pine

Pinus nigra Ssp nigra

This evergreen's name tells you where it might come from and it was another tree planted as part of the original design in the 1830s. This tree is also called the black pine as it looks dark when you stand under it and look up at its irregular branches. The flowers that appear in May are either yellow if male, or red if female.

N Italian Cypress

Cupressus sempervirens

This stately column-shaped evergreen comes from the Eastern Mediterranean. It is probably another tree planted in the 1830s. It has light brown cones throughout the year and in March it produces tiny yellow flowers. The leaf is made up of tiny green scales.

O Field Maple

Acer campestre

We finish our tour at the UK's only native maple. The leaves are palmate with five 'fingers' and the bark is tessellated. Like all maples, the buds are opposite decussate which means they are paired branchlets at 90°. In autumn the leaves go a lovely gold then red. The fruits (samaras) are paired seeds parallel to each other.



* A native tree species is one that has been in the British Isles since after the most recent glacial period, around 11,000 years ago. Anything else from other countries is non-native.