

HISTORY

Montpellier Gardens lie at the heart of the Cheltenham Conservation Area. Established over 200 years ago they were designed as pleasure gardens at the height of Cheltenham's Spa era. The Gardens are one of the town's 'Jewels in the Crown' and still serve their original purpose as a major focal point for recreation for residents and visitors alike. The Gardens have a fascinating history, ranging from the venue for one of the first balloon ascents during the 1830s, to one of the first parachute jumps in 1838, to military use for training in the two World Wars.

Montpellier was developed by Henry Thompson at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1809 he opened a wooden pump room which was replaced in 1817 by the present stone building which is opposite Montpellier Gardens. The domed circular room, known as the Rotunda, was added on in 1825 by the architect John B. Papworth, who also designed the Lansdown Estate. The Gardens were established soon after the opening of the pump rooms in 1809. Originally they were developed as ornamental pleasure grounds for visitors of the spa to 'promenade' in. By the 1830s there was a pavilion, a Chinese pagoda and an ornamental fountain. Montpellier Gardens quickly became a focus for many of the social events of the town; during the 1830s and 1840s they were used for a number of balloon ascents, including the Great Nassau Balloon in 1837. The Bandstand was built in 1864 and is reputedly one of the oldest in England.

TREE WALK

Montpellier Gardens were formally laid out with avenues of trees and wide lawns in 1813. The tree-lined broad walk, framed with lime trees, forms the main feature of the Gardens over which the statue of William IV, King of England from 1830 to 1837, casts a watchful eye. This rare statue commemorates his coronation. Today's design of the Gardens is based on the layout in the 1920s. This iconic and peaceful setting provides the backdrop to many of Cheltenham's festivals.

CONTACT US!

✉ To join the Friends of Montpellier Bandstand and Gardens, please find Membership Forms in the Gardens' Café or the Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum

🌐 www.cheltenham.co.uk

☎ Tree section: 01242 264 262

General Park Enquiries: 01242 262626

Tourist information centre: 01242 522 878

A SELF-GUIDED TREE WALK OF MONTPELLIER GARDENS



*ENJOY A VISIT TO LEARN ABOUT
TREES AT MONTPELLIER GARDENS*



1



Wellingtonia
(*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)

The Wellingtonia is a large, evergreen conifer which is a native of California. It is one of the world's largest trees and can live more than 3000 years. It was introduced to Britain in 1853 and named after the Duke of Wellington. Sequoia is the name of the native American who developed the Indian alphabet.

2



Japanese Elm
(*Zelkova serrata*)

Introduced from Japan in 1861, this tree is a member of the elm family but this species is resistant to Dutch elm disease. It is frequently used for bonsai cultivation but can grow to more than 25 metres high and equally broad. It has gold/bronze autumn colour and flaky bark upon maturity. It can live for more than 500 years and the 10 oldest Zelkova are national monuments in Korea. It is hoped that this species will be resistant to future climate change.

3



Sweet Gum
(Liquidambar)

This collection of 3 similar forms of Liquidambar tree, originally from North America and Mexico. When crushed, the leaves have the fragrance of resin or turpentine and they turn scarlet and golden in colour. Where these trees are located used to stand a large copper beech tree planted in 1812 to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo. Sadly the tree had to be removed due to its decay and its increasing habit of shedding large limbs.



4



Common Limes
(*Tilia x europaea*)

The common lime is a large, deciduous tree which is a hybrid between the small-leaved and broad-leaved lime. It is a long lived tree, commonly used for avenue planting. It can grow to great heights and has been known to reach over 50 metres tall. These trees are some of the tallest in the middle of Cheltenham and are up to 100 years old.

5



Upright Hornbeams
(*Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata'*)

The hornbeam 'Fastigiata' is a medium-sized, deciduous tree, often planted in streets and parks. The crown is narrow, becoming compact, almost triangular in shape. The leaves turn a rich yellow and orange in autumn. These two are planted as part of the upgrade of the gardens in 2005. This tree provides the densest timber of all our native trees.

6



Oriental Plane
(*Platanus orientalis*)

The oriental plane is a large, deciduous tree with spreading branches and maple-like leaves. It has attractive flaky bark and round spiky fruit. Its native range extends from south-eastern Europe to India, where it grows naturally beside rivers. It had been introduced to England by 1592. This is one of two species which makes the London plane.