

St Fagans Tree Walk

Walking distance: 1KM

This leaflet will take you on a self-guided walk around the gardens of St Fagans giving you the opportunity to look at some of our outstanding trees. **Please be aware that this will take you along a route that will include some steps (an alternative version is available that can be done with pushchairs or wheelchairs).**

The trees included in the tree trail are all labelled with their Welsh, English and Latin names. Labels are generally about 3m up on the main trunks.

The walk starts at the end of the tunnel that links the Castle Gardens with the rest of the museum site.

As you leave the tunnel, you pass a number of Hickories (**Carya spp**), on both your right and left. Hickories are an American hardwood species previously used for wagon wheels. The Bitternut Hickory (**Carya caudiformis**) is labelled.

Immediately in front of you is a Sweet Gum (**Liquidambar styraciflua**). Sweet gums have outstanding autumn colour and storax, the clear resin that the tree secretes, is used for medicinal and pharmaceutical preparations as well as for adhesives, incense, perfuming, powders and soaps.

Take the upper path, to the left, rather than going down the steps to the fishponds.

Turn left along the magnificent avenue of pines, which were planted in the 1870s. These are mostly the Black Pine (**Pinus nigra**) but there are also some Scots Pine (**Pinus sylvestris**), to the left. You can identify pines by the number of needles bunched together. Both have two, but the Scots Pine has shorter compact needles and the Black Pine longer, messier needles.

Continue on the path, bearing left, past a half moon window in the wall on the right, and some fossilised Giant Clubmosses, which were brought to St Fagans by Lady Mary Windsor from a local coal mine where they were found.

On the left is a Norway Maple (**Acer plantanoides**), a deciduous broadleaf tree native to northern Europe that was introduced to the UK in the 17th century.

At the cross roads go straight ahead. To the left is a huge Sessile Oak (**Quercus petraea**) and on the right is the orchard. Continue past Stryd Lydan Barn. The whole of the terraces was orchard in late 18th century and was then planted as a miniature arboretum with conifers in the mid 19th century. It was replanted as orchard in 1901 / 1902, although a few other species are present. These include the three-lobed apple tree (**Malus trilobata**). The tree blooms during April and May producing white flowers and yellow fruits and in the autumn the deeply three-lobed leaves turn from orange to red to deep purple. There is also a Monkey Puzzle (**Araucaria araucana**) a native of Chile. The seeds have a high carbohydrate content and the collection, storage, trade and preparation of meals from them is an important part of the traditional lives of the Pehuenche people.

Continue to walk down the slope, bearing right (signposted to the Castle Gardens), with the water garden to your left. Here there is a Purple Leaved Norway Maple (**Acer platanoides 'Crimson King'**) and a weeping willow (**Salix x sepulcralis 'Chrysocoma'**). Walk over the stone bridge and continue uphill bearing right, noting the magnificent Magnolia (**Magnolia x veitchii 'Isca'**) that stands by the large fishponds at the bottom of the terraces. In Spring it is covered in white flowers which reflect in the fishponds.

Go through the gate at the top (rather than along the terraces) and you enter the Mulberry Grove, where there are several Black Mulberry (**Morus nigra**) trees. The mulberry tree lives to a great age; some of the mulberry trees in the garden are well over a hundred years old. As the trees get old, they often fall down, but new trees grow up from the fallen trunks.

Continue to the left, past the apricot trees trained on the walls and at the end of the greenhouses, turn left, passing up some steps with a church tower in the distance in front of you. At the top of the steps, turn right along the terrace, past the Rosary on your left, and go into the Castle entrance through a gate in the wall.

By the wall are two huge Cedars of Lebanon (**Cedrus libani**). Turn left, past another mulberry and continue to an avenue of Limes (**Tilia x europaea**) that line the entrance to the Castle. On the far left hand side are 4 Walnuts (**Juglans regia**). Continue into the Castle Courtyard through the arch and walk to the right of the large lead cistern. Go through the gate on the right hand side into the Parterre and turn left past the Castle Buttery and back onto the top of the terraces. Pause on the balcony

to look at the view down over the fishponds, and the Cut-leaved Beech (**Fagus sylvatica 'Aspleniifolia'**) that is part way along the terrace to the right.

Continue down the steps, past two Coastal Redwoods (**Sequoia sempervirens**) behind the fence (no access) to the left of the path. Mature specimens in the USA are amongst the largest living organisms on earth.

Once at the other side of the fishponds, to the right is an avenue of Plane trees, which line the banks. These are mostly London Plane (**Platanus x acerifolia**). Rather than walking along here, continue up towards the flight of steps. On the left there are several trees of interest. Firstly, the Maidenhair Tree (**Ginkgo biloba**); the imprints of its distinctive leaves are found as ancient fossils all over the world. Then there is a Paper-bark Maple (**Acer griseum**), a native of China and at the bottom of the steps and to the right are two Fern-leaved Maples (**Acer japonicum 'Aconitifolium'**) and a Tulip Tree (**Liriodendron tulipifera**).

Climbing the steps you reach the entrance to the tunnel once more and the end of this tree walk.

There are plenty of other trees to explore elsewhere in the woodlands at St Fagans during your visit.

February 2018