

Tree Walk Notes by Jane Wigle

Held on Tuesday May 12, 7 to 8:30pm

Leader: Todd Irvine, a certified arborist specializing in educating homeowners, students and professionals about the care of trees and stewardship of the urban forest. Todd is the founder of City Forest: <https://www.cityforest.ca/about>

Notes: The term "Urban Forestry" was coined in 1965 by **Dr. Erik Jorgensen**, a professor at the Faculty of Forestry at University of Toronto, and the term is now used worldwide.

Average tree cover in City of Toronto is 20%

City's goal is to increase tree cover to 40%

Seaton Village is quite good, at approximately 60% - mostly street trees - planted and maintained by the city. Less tree coverage in back yards.

Route: from corner of Palmerston and Yarmouth Gardens; across Vermont Square Park to Rossmore; north on Rossmore to Vermont, west on Vermont to Mourning Cloak Lane, south on the lane to Yarmouth Gardens, west on Yarmouth to Manning, south on Manning to Palmerston Gardens, east on Palmerston Gardens to Vermont Square Park.

Trees and interesting factoids along the route:

Tree at north end of playground in Vermont Square Park is a Musclewood - a native deciduous species, hardy, slow growing and very dense wood. Musclewood is also known as American Hornbeam.

Midway along Rossmore there is an Ironwood (Hophornbeam) - has the hardest and densest of any hardwood in Canada - a GREAT street tree. Similar to Musclewood, it is hardy and slow growing. In forest it is a good understory tree - shade tolerant.

Yellowwood (also on Rossmore) - not native to our specific region, but prevalent in middle United States (North Carolina, Kentucky etc) - has nice fragrant wisteria-like flowers. The Yellowwood tree has similar bark to a Beech tree. Unfortunately, Beech trees are now in decline due to the Beech Bark disease.

On Vermont, right at the north end of Rossmore, there is a fine Ginkgo Biloba. Ginkgo was the first deciduous tree - a living fossil - the species has survived well over 200 million years. Male and female flowers are on separate Ginkgo trees. The female trees produce a smelly fruit.

North of St Alban's - a lovely sugar maple - right now in flower with baby leaves coming out - not "hardened off" yet, making them vulnerable to frost damage.

Norway Maple trees have become an invasive species in our City ravines as they can easily spread by seed and they tend to shade out and out compete our native trees and shrubs.

Along Mourning Cloak Lane, Todd discussed conifers - he felt it would be very nice to increase the balance of conifers in the city - to have more green in winter. There was a very good example of a large Norway spruce at the north end of the lane. Norway spruce is hardier than the native white spruce.

In the side garden of the house at the SW corner of Yarmouth Gardens and Palmerston Ave there is a VERY special tree, a deciduous conifer called Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) Another fossil tree (like ginkgo) that until the 1940s was thought to have been extinct - but then was discovered in China. Todd said that no one knows how tall they can grow

because they have only been grown in different places around the world since the 1940s. Try looking up "Dawn Redwood" and read about this fascinating tree in Wikipedia.

Also along Yarmouth Gardens: Eastern white cedar - a great tree. And native Serviceberries - large shrub/small tree - birds love them. Linden trees. Manitoba maple (aka box elders) - probably not planted - volunteers - can grow anywhere - they are survivors. Eastern redbud - a great native species, and Ohio buckeye, not native but a good, hardy, rugged species - nice flowers - somewhat similar to horse chestnut trees.

At Manning Ave Todd discussed pruning techniques. It can be very damaging to trees to cut off large limbs - the large wound may not heal and there can be resulting damage to the heartwood. Also this can shift the entire structure and balance of the tree. Also, when lower limbs are removed it means that the tree has to work much harder to transport water and nutrients up to the upper branches.

Along Palmerston Gardens - a Tulip Tree - native, very fast growing and can become quite large. The Tulip Tree was introduced to Toronto from the northern United States a number of years ago. It produces yellow tulip shaped flowers in May to early June.

Carolina Poplar in one of the backyards on the north side - probably one of the largest trees in the neighbourhood. Very fast growing and somewhat weak, but Todd noted that the tree had been pruned with skill.

There are a lot of Little Leaf Lindens growing on Palmerston Gardens and some of the neighbouring streets. It is a hardy, adaptable non-native street tree. It is related to our native Basswood tree.

Weeping Cherry in bloom on the south side near Palmerston Ave.- not native. This tree's pink flowers cascade down the tree in the spring. It is a smaller ornamental street tree. Todd showed us where it had been grafted.