

Bell Street Park Tree Walk



1. Raywood Ash - *Fraxinus oxycarpa* 'Raywood'

- This Ash variety is a reliable shade provider that is uniquely dark green compared to most tree varieties.
- In the late fall, leaves provide a stunning show of rich red to deep burgundy color.
- Wood used to make tool handles, oars, and baseball bats.

2. Red Ironbark Eucalyptus - *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*

- Eucalyptus are from Australia originally. 300 different species in California. Grown along roads and highways.
- Very drought tolerant.
- The wood is relatively hard and dense, and is often used for firewood. It has very high resistance to rotting and can be used for fence posts, piers, sleepers.
- Retains dead bark year after year, so the trunk appears to have a hard weathered outer layer.

3. Glossy Privet and mystery tree - *Ligustrum lucidum*

- Can grow in poor soil, with little water, and can withstand heavy wind.
- Bluish black fruits, which are poisonous, can stain the sidewalk,
- Has become an invasive weed in California.

4. Dawn redwood - *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*

- This species was thought to be extinct, rediscovered in the 1940s in China.
- Once discovered, seeds were sent all over the world and there are a handful of big ones in this area.
- Deciduous.

5. Palms

a. Canary Island Date Palm - *Phoenix canariensis*

- Thick trunk covered in diamond-shaped leaf scars
- Inedible orange fruits. Closely related to a different species which produce commercial dates.
- In the Canary Islands, the sap of this date palm is used to make palm syrup.

b. Desert fan palm - *Washingtonia filifera*

- When the fronds die they remain attached and drop down to cloak the trunk in a wide skirt. The shelter that the skirt creates provides a microhabitat for many small birds and invertebrates.

- The fruit of the fan palm was eaten raw, cooked, or ground into flour for cakes by native Californians. The Cahuilla and related tribes used the leaves to make sandals, thatch roofs, and baskets. The stems were used to make cooking utensils.

C. Mexican Fan Palm - *Washingtonia robusta*

- Most widely grown palm in California.
- Accordion-like leaf is fan-shaped.
- Native to western Sonora and Baja California. Closely related to *W. filifera*, has narrower trunk and grows slightly taller and faster, somewhat less cold hardy.

6. Chinese Elm - *Ulmus parvifolia*

- Resistant to dutch elm disease.
- Mottled, flakey bark when older.

7. Red Firethorn - *Pyracantha coccinea*

- The European species of firethorn that has been cultivated in gardens since the late 16th century.
- The tree has small white flowers. It produces small, bright red berries. The fruit is bitter and astringent, making it inedible when raw.
- The fruit can be cooked to make jellies, jams, sauces and marmalade. It ranges from southern Europe to western Asia.
- Protection mechanism of thorns.

8. Coast Redwood - *Sequoia sempervirens*

- The state tree of California.
- It is an evergreen, long-lived, monoecious tree living 1,200–1,800 years or more. This species includes the tallest living trees on Earth, reaching up to 379 feet in height (without the roots) and up to 29 feet in diameter at breast height. Lucky to have the tallest, biggest, and oldest trees in California.
- Grow best in mountainous regions where there is lots of fog.

9. Southern Magnolia - *Magnolia grandiflora*

- Magnolia is an ancient genus. Appearing before bees did, the flowers are theorized to have evolved to encourage pollination by beetles.
- Can be identified by its evergreen thick leathery leaves, large white flowers, and large seed pods with bright red seeds inside.
- Most commonly planted tree in Palo Alto.

10. Blackwood acacia - *Acacia melanoxylon*

- Nitrogen fixer.
- Leaves have feathery leaflets when young. As tree matures, leaves switch to long, elliptical shape.
- Twisty red seed pods.

11. Ginkgo - *Ginkgo Biloba*

- Distantly related to conifers, but instead of needles they have broad, fan-shaped leaves that turn brilliant yellow in late fall.
- Female trees are generally not planted due to the foul-smelling seeds they produce.
- Ginkgo (also known as Maidenhair Trees) have been around for a very long time. Some fossilized ginkgo leaves have been dated to 270 million years ago – the time when dinosaurs still roamed the earth, hence it is nicknamed "Dinosaur Tree."

12. Black Walnut - *Juglans nigra*

- Black Walnuts are **allelopathic** which means that it releases chemicals from roots and other tissues which harm other organisms and prevents them from growing nearby.
- The edible part of the nut can be included in ice cream and baked goods to add crunch and flavor.

13. Olive - *Olea europaea*

- Native to Mediterranean region, evergreen, drought tolerant, very long-lived, centuries a few trees over a thousand years old.
- Olive trees were introduced to the California Mission gardens by Franciscan missionaries for the oil from their olives. Olive trees that bear fruit can be very messy; they are best suited to areas where dropped fruit won't be a problem.

14. Coast Live Oak - *Quercus agrifolia*

- Was dominant tree in this area before farming and then cities developed.
- Basis for the city name Oakland.
- Native Californians used hammerstones to crack the shells and separate the kernels. They then placed the kernels in a scoop-shaped winnowing basket and tossed until the friction of the basket's weave removed all traces of skins, which blew away in the wind. After winnowing, the acorn's bitter tannins were leached by soaking the kernels in cold water. Finally, the kernels were placed into bedrock mortars where women pounded pestles until the acorns were the consistency of flour.