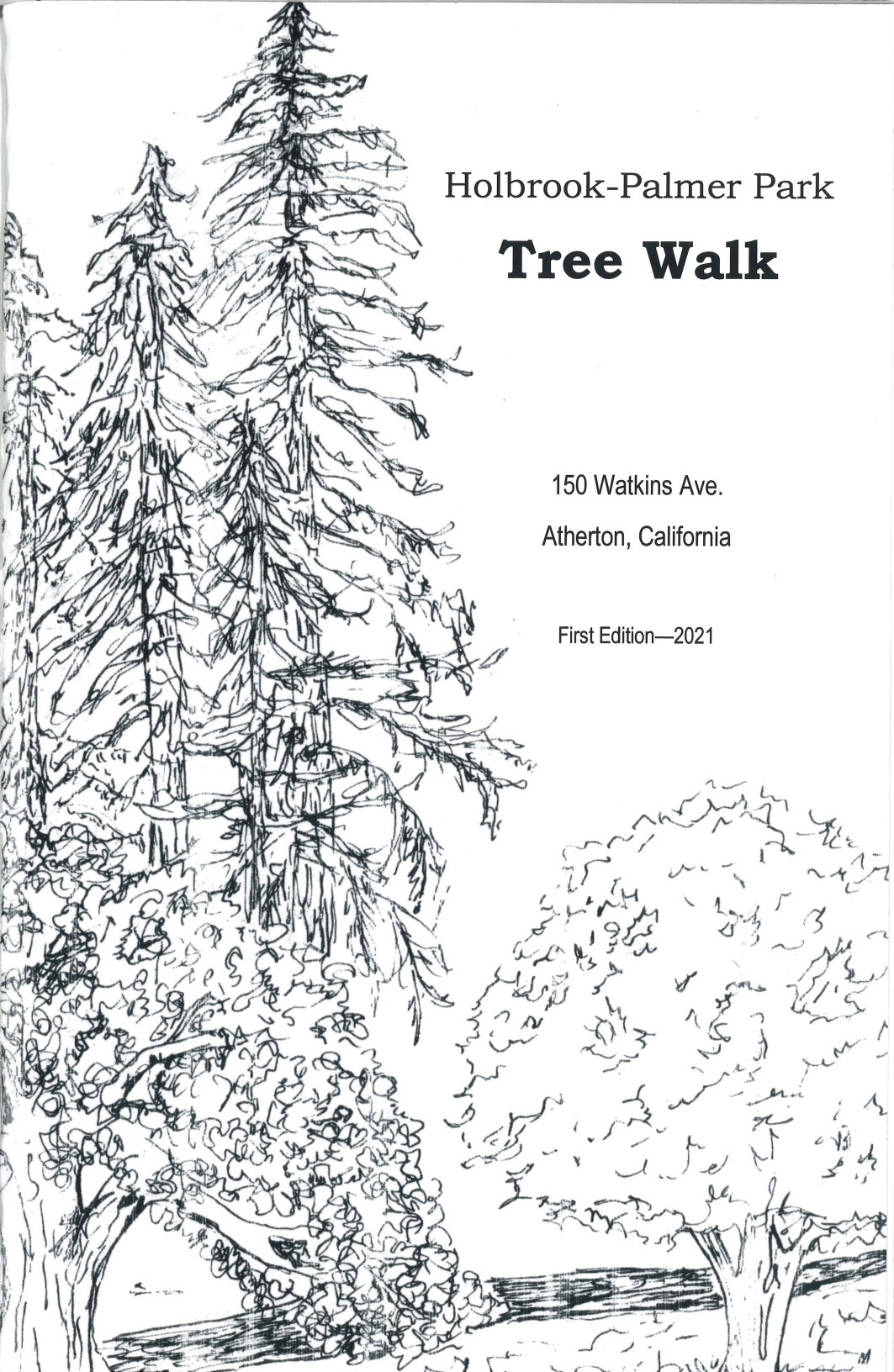


Holbrook-Palmer Park

Tree Walk

150 Watkins Ave.

Atherton, California

First Edition—2021

The History of Holbrook-Palmer Park

Nothing beats a sunny day in the park.

The 22-acre area, which is now the park, was established in 1883 as *Elmwood,* the estate used by the Holbrook family for weekend visits. Charles Holbrook's daughter Olive inherited the estate and used it as her summer home with her husband Silas H. Palmer. Upon Olive's death in 1958, the estate was gifted to the town of Atherton. The park has hosted live concerts, holiday events and art exhibits and is home to an arboretum, historic buildings, tennis courts, a children's playground, a parcourse and playing fields for baseball, soccer and lacrosse.

Architecture:

The original main house was built in 1875 in the Second Empire style but burned and was replaced in 1959.

The carriage house was built in 1897 in a Colonial Revival style.

The water tower was built in 1883 and is a rare example of a 19th century tank house.

Both the water tower and carriage house were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 26, 2016.

Learn more at:

www.athertonhistory.com

www.ci.atherton.ca.us/180/Holbrook-Palmer-Park

Welcome to the Holbrook-Palmer Park Tree Walk

Enjoy over 2 dozen varieties of trees highlighted in this Tree Walk Brochure.

The approximately 1 mile walk begins at the North Meadow parking lot. It proceeds clockwise along the paved path circling around the outer edge of the park, past the tennis courts and baseball diamond, paralleling Watkins Ave with a turn around the Main House in the center of the park.

When enjoying the trees, you may pick up fallen leaves and seeds, but PLEASE do not pick anything directly off the trees. This incudes leaves, bark, cones and/or flowers. Of course, take as many photos as you like.

A Map of the featured trees is included in the centerfold of this brochure.



What is a tree?
A woody plant at least 15 feet tall usually with a single trunk and a spreading crown of leaves.

For more information contact: TreeCommittee@ci.atherton.ca.us
Atherton Tree Committee: www.athertontree.org

Tree 1 (D,4) **Shumard Red Oak** *Quercus shumardii*

Origin: south-eastern United States

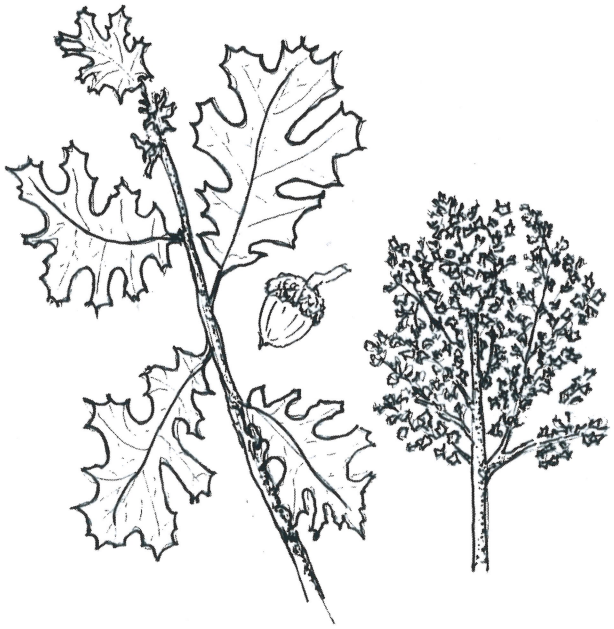
Named for Benjamin Franklin Shumard (1820-69), state geologist of Texas

Deciduous; Grows to 50 ft

Large 6 inch, lobed leaves with pointed tips; red fall foliage color

Large trunk needs at least 5 foot radius of clearance.

Strong wood often used for furniture making



Welcome to the tree walk!

Walk around slowly and enjoy the park

Notice the green watering bags used to help newly planted trees get established. These bags release water slowly to help new plants through our dry summers.

Tree 2 (C,4) **Coast Live Oak** *Quercus agrifolia*

Origin: California

Agrifolia is Latin for rough leaves

Evergreen; Grows to 70 ft

Cupped leaves with pointed edge

Underside of leaves have fuzzy hairs along the veins

Thick leaf with waxy coating to prevent evaporation during hot dry summers

Acorns are narrow with a pointed end, about 1.5 inches long

Dense foliage

Drought tolerant – does not like any summer watering, so keep away from lawns



Find a leaf and count the points

See if you can find an acorn that the squirrels missed – and draw it

Tree 3 (B,4) **Norway Maple** *Acer platanoides*

Origin: Norway

Deciduous; Grows to 80 ft

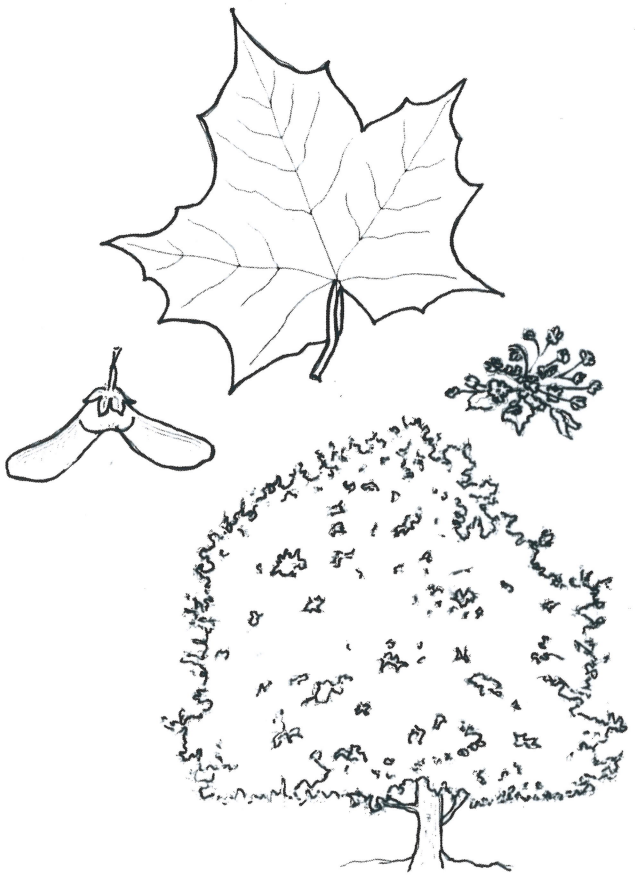
Palmate leaves with 5 main veins

Lobed with pointed tips; golden fall color

Yellow spring flower clusters

Pair of spread winged seeds are about 4 inches long; they spin like a helicopter blade when falling from the tree in the winter

Roots can be invasive and cause infrastructure damage



Find a leaf on the ground and compare the veins to the fingers on your hand

Tree 4 (A,9) **Redwood grove** *Sequoia sempervirens*

Origin: California

Genus name, Sequoia is named after a Cherokee Indian chief

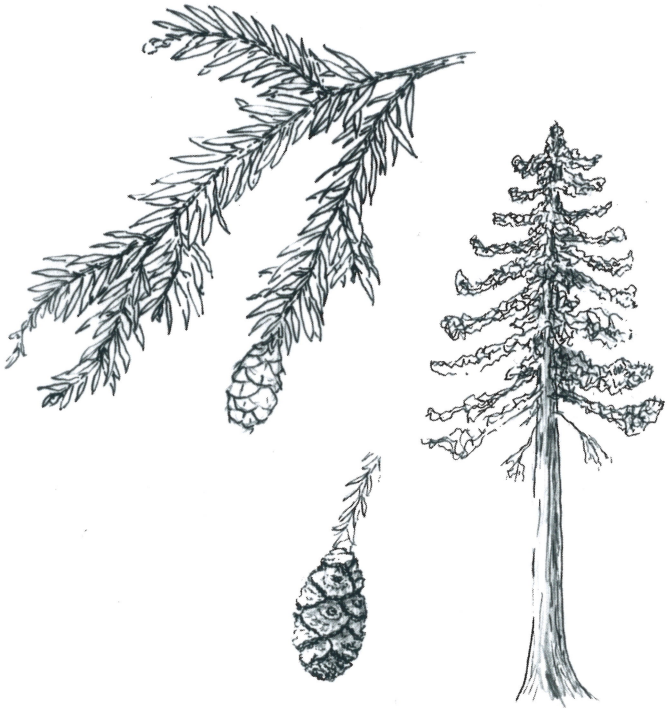
Sempervirens is Latin for 'always green'

Evergreen; In coastal mountains, can grow to 370 feet, in drier flat land can grow to 100 feet

Resinous wood is resistant to insects, making this an excellent wood for construction.

Thick reddish bark is resistant to fires

Redwoods prefer the coastal fog belt where they can absorb water from the air so it doesn't have to travel 300 feet up from the roots.



This is our California state tree

Tree 5 (B,9) **Blue Atlas Cedar** *Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'*

Origin: Himalayas

Glauca is Latin for blue-grey

Evergreen; Grows to 80 ft

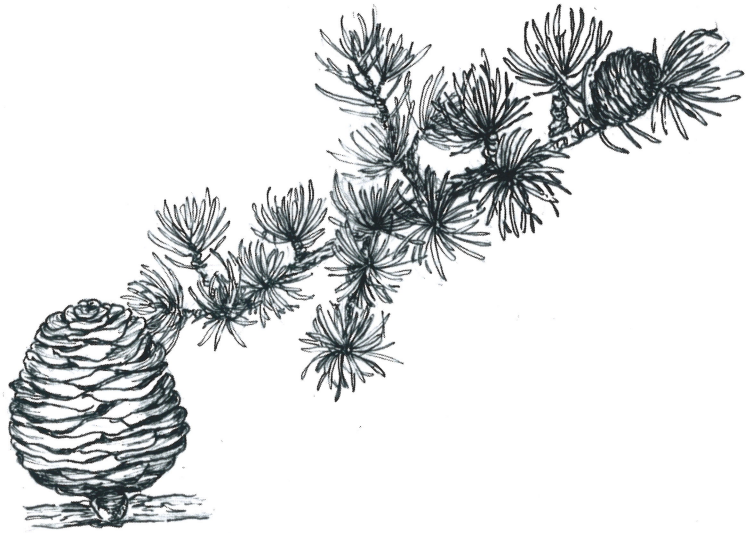
Needle like leaves grow in clusters off the branches

On this species the needles have a blue – green color

Upright cones that break apart when mature to release seeds. The 'cone petals' drop around the tree.

Aromatic wood

Fine specimen tree



Look for a cone petal on the ground. Do the needles look bluish to you?

Tree 6 (G,9) **Blue Gum Eucalyptus** *Eucalyptus globulus*

Origin: Australia

Evergreen; Grows to 150 feet

Many species - Blue gum is one of largest

Aromatic leaves and bark

Not recommended for residential planting since they produce a lot of leaf and bark litter



Koalas eat Eucalyptus leaves. Imagine a Koala in our park.

Tree 7 (I,9) **Cajeput** *Melaleuca quinquenervia*

Origin: Australia

Evergreen; Grows to 30 feet

Rounded crown creates dense shade underneath

Pink bottle brush type flowers at the ends of branches

Many thin layers of papery bark insulate the tree

Tough tree that can tolerate difficult conditions – drought, heat, wind, poor or salty soil



On hot summer days, Playschool kids can cool off under this tree

Tree 8 (J,9) **Giant Sequoia** *Sequoiadendron giganteum*

Origin: California

Evergreen; Grows to 250 ft in native habitat; to 100 ft in urban areas

Massive trunks can have a diameter of 30 ft in native habitat

Foliage is scale like

Bark can be up to 2 feet thick

Cones are 3 inches

Giant Sequoias grow in open groves among other types of trees

Some trees are estimated to be 4000 years old

Slow growing, so plan for mature size



If this tree had a 30 foot diameter trunk- measure the spread

Tree 9 (M,9) **Douglas Fir** *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Origin: western North America

Common name honors David Douglas, a Scottish botanist who, in 1827, brought the tree back for cultivation in Scotland.

Species name honors Archibald Menzies, a Scottish physician who first documented the tree on Vancouver Island in 1791

Evergreen; Grows to 250 ft in native habitat; to 100 ft in urban areas

Needle like leaves stick out all around the branches

Cones hang down, are 3-4 inches and have 3 pointed tips on the scales



Look for other plants named after people

Tree 10 (P,8) **Elm experimental grove** *Ulmus varieties*

Origin: central Asia

Deciduous; Grows to 60 ft

In the 1980s and 90s Dutch elm disease spread through Atherton and killed many trees. Holbrook Palmer Park had been called Elmwood because of the many elms on site. People were so concerned about preserving this iconic landscaping tree that a study to find disease resistant varieties started in the Park in 1992. The varieties planted were Prospector, Frontier, American Liberty and Valley Forge. A ten year evaluation report was written by Larry Costello.

The Frontier variety proved to have the best branch structure and resistance of the varieties grown. It also has an unusual red-purple leaf color in the fall.

Holbrook-Palmer Park contributed to a national study of Elms!



Is there a tree variety you would like to study?

Tree 11 (R,7) **Deodar Cedar** *Cerdus deodara*

Origin: Himalayas

'deodara' is Hindi for 'tree of the gods'

Evergreen; Grows to 80 ft

Needle like leaves grow in clusters off the branches

Upright cones break apart when mature to release seeds.

The 'cone petals' drop around the tree.

Deodar cedar has drooping branch tips

Aromatic wood

A fine specimen tree that needs plenty of room to spread its lower branches



Can you find a cedar cone petal?

Look for more Deodar Cedars along the path near Watkins Ave.

Tree 12 (V,5) **Pin Oak** *Quercus palustris*

Origin: eastern North America

Deciduous; Grows to 70 ft

Leaves about 4 inches long, deeply lobed with pointed tips

Underside of leaf has tufts of hair along the veins

Some orange Fall leaf color

Small Acorns – about half an inch, with a very shallow cap

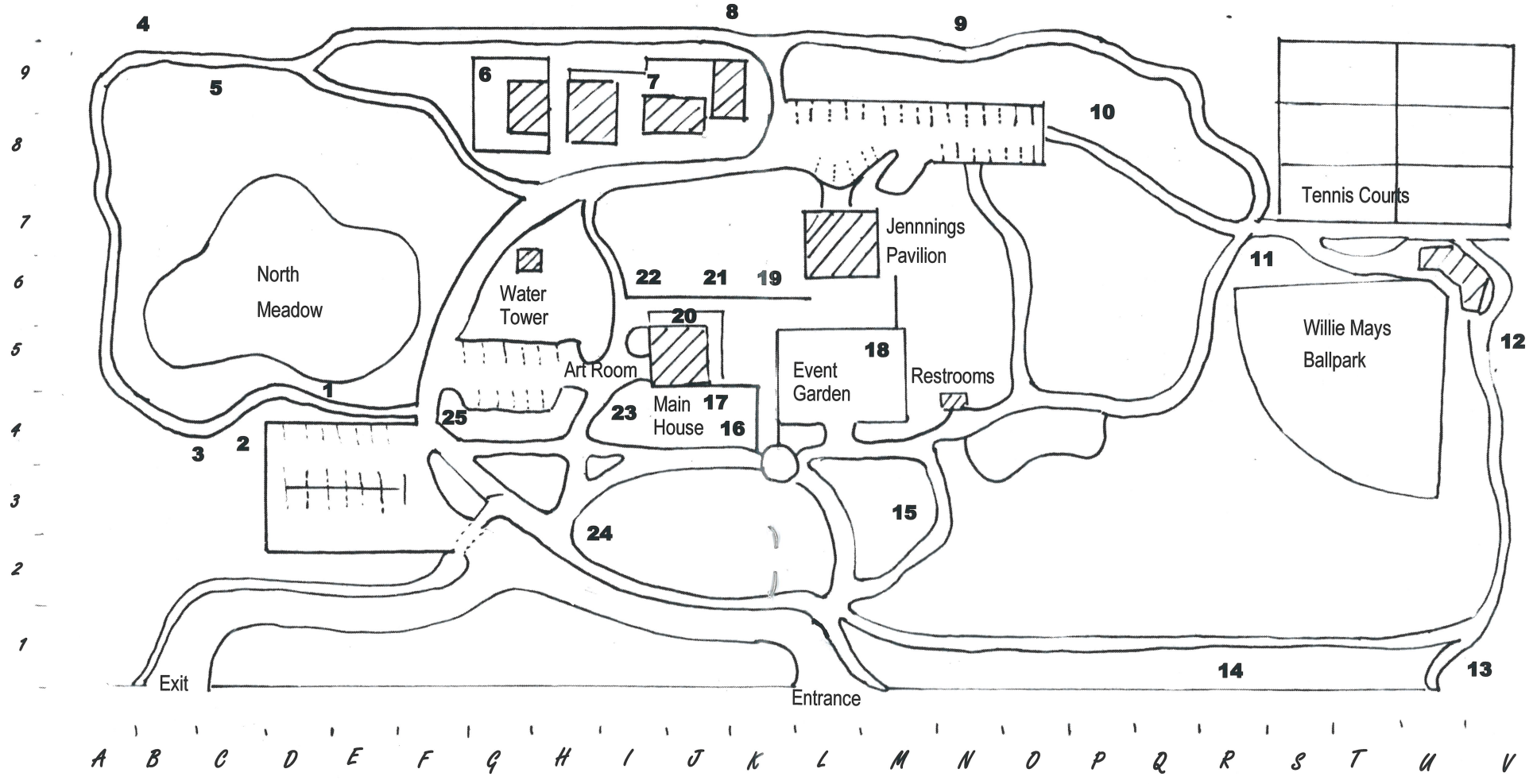
Fine tall stately tree



Find a leaf and count the points

Holbrook-Palmer Park TREE WALK MAP

1	(D, 4) Red Shumard Oak	10	(P, 8) Elm (Experimental Grove)	19	(K. 6) Southern Magnolia
2	(C, 4) Coast Live Oak	11	(R, 7) Deodar Cedar	20	(J, 6) Saucer Magnolia
3	(B, 4) Norway Maple	12	(V, 5) Pin Oak	21	(J, 6) Japanese Maple
4	(A, 9)Redwood Grove	13	(U, 1) Tulip Tree	22	(I, 6) Monkey Puzzle Tree
5	(B, 9) Blue Atlas Cedar	14	(R,1) Crepe Myrtle	23	(I, 5)Crabapple
6	(G, 9) Blue Gum Eucalyptus	15	(M, 3) Valley Oak	24	(F, 4) Olive
7	(I, 9) Cajeput	16	(J, 4) Cockspur Hawthorn	25	(F, 4) Ornamental Pomegranate
8	(J, 9) Giant Sequoia	17	(J, 4) Sweet Gum		
9	(M, 9) Douglas Fir	18	(L, 5) Chaste Tree		



Tree 13 (M,3) **Tulip Tree** *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Origin: eastern North America

Common name comes from spring flowers shaped like tulips

Deciduous; Grows to over 100 ft

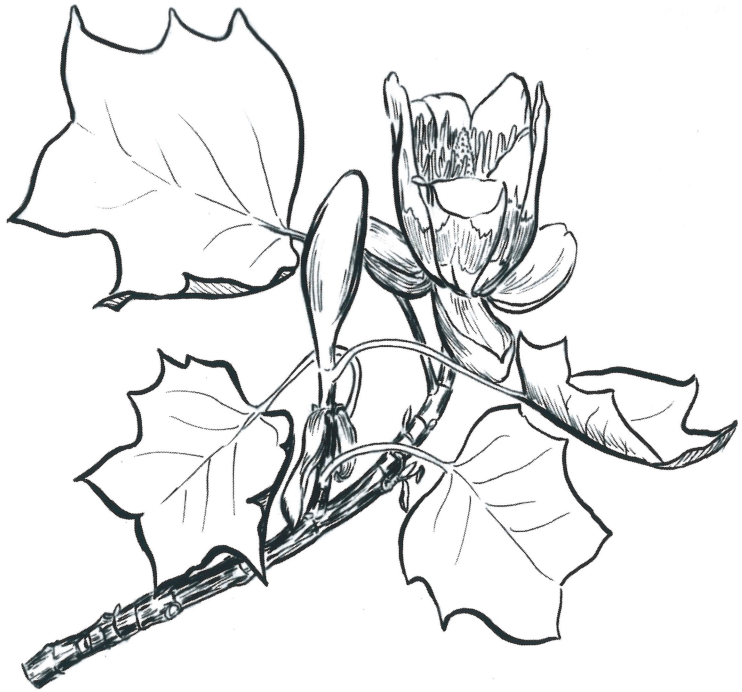
In its native environment it can grow to 200 ft – taller than any other deciduous tree.

Leaves have unusual symmetric shape with four pointed tips

The seeds are single winged and float down as spinning blades

Give plenty of room since it can grow very tall and roots can be invasive

Plant away from patios since it produces lots of leaf and seed litter, as well as dripping honeydew from aphids



Draw a yellow tulip and imagine it growing on a tree!

Tree 14 (R,1) **Crepe Myrtle** *Lagerstroemia indica*

Origin: China, Japan

Deciduous; Grows to 10-30 feet

Colorful frilly, crepe paper type spring flowers in pinks or whites

Oval leaf with smooth edge

Fall leaf color

Interesting cupped seed pods persist on tree through the winter

Smooth, layered bark

Beautiful ornamental; drought tolerant once established



Look for a seed pod and count the sections

Tree 15 (M,3) **Valley Oak** *Quercus lobata*

Origin: California

Lobata is Latin for 'lobed'

Deciduous; Grows to 100 feet with wide spread

Majestic trees with thick trunk covered in scaly bark

Rounded canopy with roughly bent branches

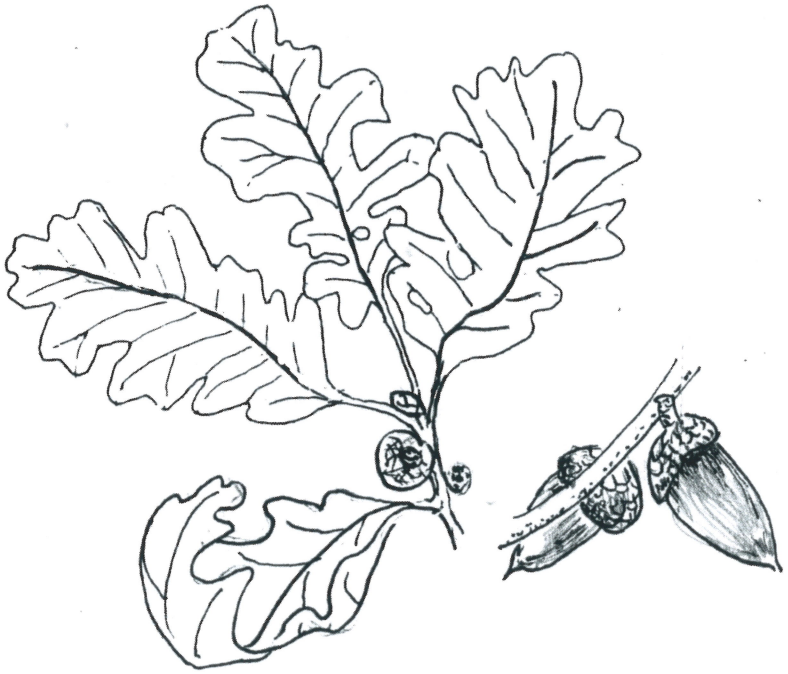
Leaves are deeply lobed with rounded ends

Oak trees produce acorns – and Valley oak produces some of the largest – up to 2 inches long

Oaks support a wide variety of animals and are important for habitats.

Drought tolerant – avoid any summer watering

Plant away from lawns; Give these trees plenty of room to spread



This tree is on the emblem for the Town of Atherton.

Tree 16 (J,4) **Cockspur Hawthorn** *Crataegus crus-galli*

Origin: eastern North America

Common name 'cockspur' refers to the thorns on the branches, like a rooster's foot spur

Deciduous; Grows to 30 ft

Small lobed leaf; Fall color is purplish

White spring flowers become small red fruits

Good small landscape tree



We are coming to the Main House which is used for meetings and can be rented for weddings and events.

Tree 17 (J,4) **Sweet Gum** *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Origin: south-eastern United States

Genus name Liquidambar name refers to the fragrant resin or 'sweet gum' which exudes from the tree

Deciduous; Grows to 70 ft

Round hooked seed balls collect under these trees and can be a walking hazard

Five pointed leaves produce beautiful Fall color

Common street tree in our area



Shake a seed ball and count the tiny seeds

Tree 18 (L,5) **Chaste Tree** *Vitex agnus-castus*

Origin: China

Deciduous; Grows to 15 ft

Gorgeous summer purple flower spikes

Drought tolerant once established

They can die back in a severe frost

Nice small landscape tree



Notice Jennings Pavilion which can be rented for events

Tree 19 (K,6) **Southern Magnolia** *Magnolia grandiflora*

Origin: south-eastern United States

Genus name Magnolia honors French botanist, Pierre Magnol, who admired the tree and promoted it in Europe

Evergreen; Grows to 80 Ft

Showy large white flowers through the summer

Produces unusual pods with red seeds

Leathery leaves have a shiny green top and fuzzy brown underside. These are very slow to decompose but can be used for wreaths.

Plant where it has room to spread since it can become a large tree



Here is another tree named for a person.

Tree 20 (J,6) **Saucer Magnolia** *Magnolia soulangeana*

Origin: French hybrid developed by Etienne Soulange-Bodin in 1820 from a species that originated in China

Deciduous; Grows to 20 Ft

Beautiful big blooms in the spring before the leaves come out

Flowers can be white, pink or purple

Very nice landscape tree



How are the Saucer magnolia and the Southern magnolia different?

Tree 21 (J,6) **Japanese Maple** *Acer palmatum*

Origin: Japan

Deciduous; Grows to 30 ft

There are many different cultivars with various leaf shapes and colors

Palmate leaves with veins coming from base point

Prefers partial shade and consistent water

Nice small landscape tree



Compare this leaf to the Norway maple leaf at the beginning of the walk. How are they different?

Tree 22 (I,6) **Monkey Puzzle** *Araucaria arucana*

Origin: Chile

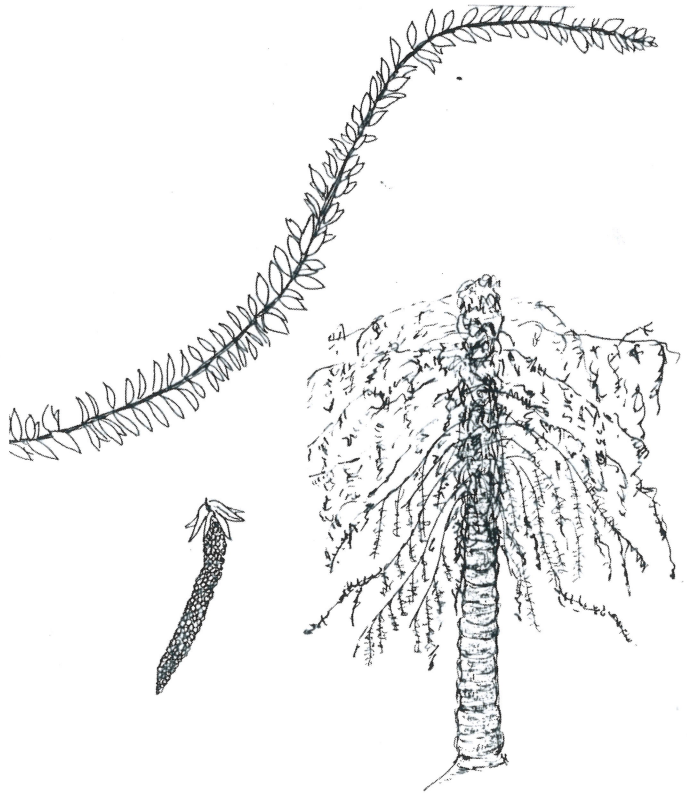
Genus name Araucaria is derived from a Chilean indigenous tribe

Common name became popular after an Englishman remarked 'It would puzzle a monkey to climb that.'

Evergreen; Grows to 100 ft

Thick, tough leaves that are very pointy

DANGER: Large seed pod is very heavy and can harm anything on which it falls



If you were a monkey, would you climb this tree?

Tree 23 (I,5) **Crabapple** *Malus floribunda*

Origin: Japan

Common name "crab" comes from a Swedish word meaning 'wild apple'

Deciduous; Grows to 20 ft

Red buds open to gorgeous pink spring bloom

Small apple fruits may be eaten by birds

Beautiful landscape tree, prefers moisture so enjoys being near a lawn



The Atherton Art Foundation office is here – check out their class schedule.

Tree 24 (H,2) **Olive** *Olea europaea*

Origin: eastern Mediterranean

Evergreen; Grows to 30 ft

Cultivated by people for millennia for valuable fruit and wood.

Long lived species

Some Missions still have the original olive trees planted in 1700s

Narrow, grey-green leaves; Drought tolerant, likes full sun

Plant fruiting varieties away from driveways and patios since the fruit can stain



Excellent California Olive oil can be produced with varieties like Leccino and Picual. Try out some California Olive oil at home.

Tree 25 (F,4) **Ornamental Pomegranate**—*Punica granatum*

Origin: eastern Mediterranean

Common name "Pomegranate" comes from Latin words for 'many seeded apple'

Deciduous; Grows to 20 ft

Bright orange flowers open in June

Small orange fruits are ornamental, but not edible

Drought tolerant

Good small landscape tree



Thank you for coming on the tree walk.

Consider planting a tree and enjoying it for many years.

To learn more about trees

Canopy website – excellent resource to learn about city trees

canopy.org

Master Gardeners – can answer questions about growing trees

smsf-mastergardeners.ucanr.edu

Books about trees:

A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us by Matt Ritter

Introduction to Trees of the Bay Area by Glenn Keator

The Life of an Oak by Glenn Keator

Thank you to the tree walk organizers:

Betsy Colby who spear-headed the project

Sally Bentz-Dalton, Atherton town Arborist

Thanks to the Atherton Arts Foundation Botanical Artists who provided the drawings:

Carol Day, MaryGrace Feehan, Sherry Hanen, Lori Henderson, Mary Ann Ho, Dorothy Hunter, Elaine Jek, Sheryl Johnson, Pam Schenk, Denise Souza, Linda Wegner

Benefits of trees -

Clean the air

Shade and cool buildings

Store water in the soil

Increase humidity through transpiration

Provide habitat for wildlife

Store carbon

Filter dust

Dampen noise

Enhance mental and social well being

Make oxygen for animals to use

Create beauty

Grow some more!

Come visit the park year-round to see the trees change over the seasons

