





Sefton Park Palm House Plant Library

As you explore the Palm House you can learn more about some of our favourite plants with this plant library. You can also find them on our Curious Compass scavenger hunt and map! These are just a few of the plants you will find in the Palm House. We love the stories they tell.

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| <p>Dragon's blood tree</p> <p><i>Dracaena draco</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Mediterranean area, to the left of the main entrance as you are walking in</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>Extinct in the wild in Gran Canaria, but easy to cultivate so they can still exist, and are also found in Morocco in the wild.</p> <p>Over-harvested for their red resin (sap) which was used as a lacquer (a hard, shiny polish) for musical instruments and furniture. It was thought to have medicinal properties.</p> <p>Native to Canary Islands, Cape Verde and Madeira and also found in Morocco. Its sap was used by the native inhabitants of the Canary Islands, the Guanches, to mummify their dead before interring them in caves.</p> <p>Some legends say that when dragons die they become dragon trees.</p> |  |
| <p>Cretan date palm</p> <p><i>Phoenix theophrasti</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Mediterranean area near the statues</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>One of over 20 species of palm tree here. Native to Crete, Greece, Turkey. Smaller than the Canary island date palm and can have smaller cluster stems. Along with the European fan palm they are the only native palm species to Europe.</p> <p>There are two of these planted at the Palm House, which were obtained from a former gardener in Greece on his honeymoon. The weddings take place in front of these now.</p> |  |

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| <p>Common olive tree</p> <p><i>Olea europea</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Mediterranean area, just past the statue of the Goat and Kid.</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>A medium sized evergreen tree. These can sometimes produce fruit (olives) in our UK climate. They are native to the Mediterranean region in Europe, Africa and Asia. They love warm subtropical climates.</p> <p>In Greek mythology it is the symbol of the goddess Athena and stands for peace and wisdom. It is said that she created the first olive tree on earth as a gift to the city of Athens following her battle with Poseidon. Hercules had a truncheon (a short stick carried as a weapon) made of olive wood.</p> <p>The shoots of new growth that appear on olive trees grow in small clusters called 'pinkies' which is where the name 'pinky' comes from. These small shoots develop into tiny flowers, ranging from green to white. All flowers have the potential to become fruits (olives).</p> <p>Olive trees can live for a long time. We think that the oldest olive tree in the world is in Crete. It's hard to tell exactly how old it is, but guesses range from 2,000-4,000 years old! It still produces fruit. Olive wood has a variety of interesting patterns and colours and can be used to make bowls, utensils, cutting boards and other items.</p> |  |
| <p>Banana plant</p> <p><i>Musa ornata</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Asia area - just past the east porch.</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>A banana tree is actually the biggest herb! This is because it has an herbaceous stem rather than a woody stem - so it's a plant rather than a tree. And bananas are actually berries. They're distantly related to ginger - another member of the rhizome family. A rhizome is a large underground stem that the plant springs from.</p> <p>More than 80% of the bananas we eat today grow in South America. They are grown in over 150 countries and there's around 1,000 different varieties of banana. The plant was first cultivated in Southeast Asia.</p> <p>All parts of the banana plant are useful. The skins can be used to remove splinters, polish shoes, dust plants and even whiten teeth.</p> |  |

Coffee plant

Coffee arabica

Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?

Asia section - just past the east porch.

About this plant:


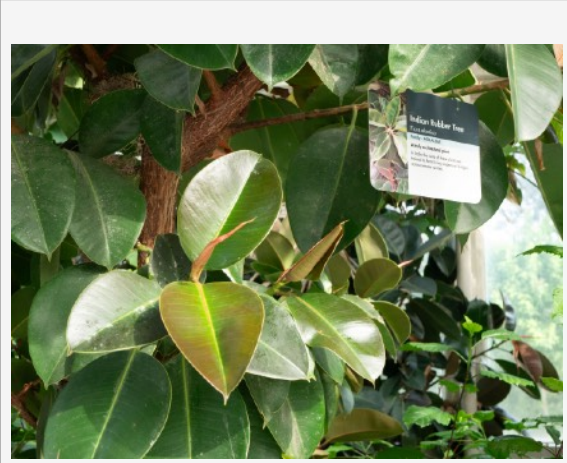
The coffee plant is native to Africa and grows well in tropical and subtropical climates. Coffee as we know it today was first used in the Middle East.



Most of today's coffee is grown in an area called 'the bean belt' that wraps around the world's equator between the tropic of cancer and the tropic of capricorn. Coffee beans come from the fruit of coffee plants, known as 'cherries.' They take 7-11 months to ripen. It can take up to 4 years for a coffee plant to mature enough to produce the cherries.



Legend has it that the first person to discover coffee was an Ethiopian goat herder named Kaldi around 850 AD. He noticed his goats eating the berries of a plant he hadn't seen before. He also noticed that they had lots of energy after doing so! He tried the berries himself and felt energised too, spreading the word about this magical plant which was the coffee tree! The first evidence of humans consuming coffee comes from Yemen in the 15th century. Yemeni traders brought the first coffee beans from Ethiopia to the Middle East. By the 1500s, coffee shops had opened up in Egypt, Syria and Istanbul and it spread from there. It is said that the coffee plant symbolises a helping hand in times of need.



The Coffee plant is a small, broadleaf evergreen shrub or small tree in the Rubiaceae family with an upright habit and typically grown in tropical climates of its native Africa. Three to four years after initial planting, small white fragrant blooms will appear from late spring to early summer. Fissured bark appears on older branches. The berries that result from the blossoms are edible with a pulpy grape-like texture, but are more likely to be harvested and processed into coffee beans. The genus name comes from the Arabic word *kahwah* meaning beverage. The species name means of Arabia.



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| <p>Spanish moss</p> <p><i>Tillandsia usneoides</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>You can find this plant throughout the Palm House. Look for it hanging from branches around the Asia and Americas sections.</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>It takes everything it needs to grow from moisture in the air. It's actually a tiny flower. It has been used for filling car seats by Ford. It is native to Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and the southern part of North America. It likes to grow in tropical and subtropical climates with high humidity.</p> <p>It is an epiphyte - a plant or plant-like organism that grows on the surface of another plant and derives its moisture and nutrients from the air, rain, water (in marine environments) or from debris accumulating around it. The plants on which epiphytes grow are called phorophytes. It photosynthesises its own energy from the sun, so it isn't a parasite. It doesn't require soil to grow like many other plants do. It's part of the bromeliad family.</p> |  |
| <p>Rubber plant</p> <p>Indian Rubber tree</p> <p><i>Ficus elastica</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Asia section, heading toward the south porch.</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>Native to Southeast Asia - India, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia. It was first used for rubber production before synthetic rubber was invented. It is different from the rubber tree (<i>Hevea brasiliensis</i>) which is native to South America. Both make a milky white sap known as latex which has been used to make rubber balls, shoes and waterproof clothes.</p> |  |

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| <p>Bromeliads</p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>You can find bromeliads throughout the Palm House! There are some big ones located near the Giant Bird of Paradise (facing the stage, look to the right)</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>Bromeliads are part of the pineapple family. They're also known as air plants, and there's over 3,500 species. In the Palm House we have around 50 species.</p> <p>Bromeliads are a family of plants (<i>Bromeliaceae</i>, the pineapple family) native to tropical North and South America. Europeans first found out about bromeliads from the second trip Columbus took to the New World in 1493, where the pineapple was being grown by the Carib tribe in the West Indies.</p> <p>The commercial pineapple (<i>Ananas comosus</i>) is native to southern Brazil and Paraguay. After the colonization of the New World it was rapidly transported to all areas of the tropics, and now is widely grown in tropical and sub-tropical areas. The only bromeliad to occur north of the tropics is Spanish "moss" (<i>Tillandsia usneoides</i>). It is neither Spanish nor a moss but an epiphytic bromeliad. It doesn't look much like a typical bromeliad, though, with its long scaly stems and reduced flowers.</p> |  |
| <p>Canary island date palm</p> <p><i>Phoenix canariensis</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Africa (central) area (facing the stage, look up to the left).</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>One of the biggest plants in the Palm House. We think it is the oldest plant in the Palm House (our 'survivor palm' in the central area, around 100 years old). A large solitary palm with a single trunk. The rough trunk's texture is made from the old leaf bases left behind as the plant grows upward. They have date-like fruits that are edible but not very tasty.</p> <p>There are around 2,600 different types of palm trees that grow in subtropical climates around the world. They are a monocot - meaning their seed sprouts a seedling with one single cotyledons. These are the first little, tiny seedling leaves that pop out of a seed as it germinates.</p> <p>These palms are found throughout the Canary Islands and can also be found in Spain.</p> |  |

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| <p>Camphor</p> <p><i>Cinnamomum camphora</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Australasia area</p> | <p>Native to Southeast Asia and found in Japan and Taiwan. Camphor oil can be used as insect repellent, and in the past has been used as a medicine, fragrance and flavouring for food. During the Black Death it was used as a fumigant to purify the air.</p> |  |
| <p>Cabbage Tree Palm</p> <p><i>Livistona australis</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Australasia area. By the West Porch and the stairs, look up and you will see the large palm curving overhead.</p> | <p>It is a fan palm native to eastern Australia, known for its fan-like leaves, edible young growth, and used by Indigenous Australians for various purposes. It is one of the tallest plants native to Australia.</p> <p>In Australia, the Gweagal people carefully cultivated the cabbage tree palm and made use of many parts. Aboriginal people used parts of this tree for food, medicine and shelter. Even the fibres were used to make string, rope and fishing line. In the nineteenth century Europeans also found a use for the fibres of cabbage tree palm, making them into hats to protect themselves from the harsh sun!</p> |  |

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| <p>Kentia palm</p> <p><i>Howea forsteriana</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Australasia area. By the West Porch.</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>This palm is native to Australia. Their feather-like pinnate leaves can grow 3-4 metres long. They can grow 4-9 metres tall. It was very popular with the Victorians and is also called a Parlour Palm.</p> <p>This palm gets its name from the capital city of Lord Howe Island, Kentia, and the genus name, <i>Howea</i>, honors the island. The species name, <i>forsteriana</i>, honors New South Wales Senator Henry William Forster, who was a key in obtaining woman suffrage for Australia.</p> |  |
| <p>Angel's trumpet</p> <p><i>Brugmansia</i></p> | <p>Where can you find this plant in the Palm House?</p> <p>Americas area. Facing the main entrance North Porch, look to your left.</p> | <p>About this plant:</p> <p>This is a tropical plant native to South America, especially the Andes mountains. It has historically been a sacred and medicinal plant - though many parts of it are toxic. It has beautiful trumpet-like flowers that hang facing downwards. The flowers can grow up to 30 cm long and have a strong smell. The tree can grow up to 10 metres tall. They are an evergreen plant with many branching trunks.</p> |  |