

Grove Park, Doncaster

Part 1 Trees

There are a variety of trees in Grove Park. Most of them are deciduous but there are a few evergreen trees. This article is a snapshot into observations during lockdown of some of the deciduous trees.



On the 25th of March when I started my observations none of the trees were in leaf as you can see in the first photograph. The first to come into leaf were the sycamore trees (see below taken on April 7th) followed by English Oaks, Ash, Wych Elm and finally on the 11th of April a few Copper Beech buds started to open.



There are two Wych Elms *Ulmus glabra* trees which are growing near the railings bordering Armthorpe Rd. On April 11th, leaves on suckers growing both from the base of the trunk and higher up the elm tree were fully open whilst the rest of the tree was still in bud.

Suckers are so named because they zap water and nutrients from the main tree and in gardens it's recommended that they be removed. Apparently, species of Elm have extensive, aggressive root systems that grow laterally and close to the surface, perfect conditions for suckers. There are two types of suckers or sprouts; watersprouts otherwise known as epicormic shoots that sprout up from the branches and trunk and emerge from latent buds we cannot see and root sprouts that originate from the root system and grow round the base of the tree. Both are vigorous vegetative shoots and can be seen in the photograph below taken on April 27th. The rest of the tree is still in bud over two weeks after the leaves on the suckers opened.



The beech trees in the park are all Copper beech *Fagus sylvatica* f.purpurea with, as the name suggests, copper coloured leaves. Also known as Purple beech, this is a cultivated form of Common beech. You can see two of them in the photograph below.



The following photograph, taken on the 25th of April, shows an ash sapling growing in the groove between the split trunk of a sycamore tree. This situation isn't unknown but a mature tree growing on another is unusual. It will be interesting to monitor what happens in the future.



Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees were the first to show signs of flower buds developing. The following photograph on the left taken on the 16th of March shows the closed flower buds looking rather like blackberries. By the 26th of March the flower buds had started to open as shown in this photograph on the right.



By the 5th of April the flower stalks had elongated and the flowers opened further.



Six days later on, the 11th of April, the pollen sacs have shed their pollen and the leaves are just starting to unfold.



By the 28th of April many of the leaves were fully open and the structure of the compound leaves is clear.



One of the interesting observations of this tree is that it is covered with cauliflower galls which appear as rusty lumps on the previous year's keys. They are caused by the gall mite *Aceria fraxinivora* which usually attacks the flowers soon after they are open so no doubt many of the flowers which I've photographed this year will already have been galled. The new galls will be green at first then become brown and stay on the tree long after the keys have flown. The second photograph shows a close up shot of two galls.



Nora Boyle