



WEST LODGE PARK
YOUR COUNTRY RETREAT



Beale Arboretum News ~ Spring 2015

Nature has woken up!



It is not too much of an exaggeration to state that as a nation we tend to be obsessed by the weather. Whatever conditions we experience during last year's growing and ripening seasons they obviously suited the trees which are noted for their spring flowering qualities. If you have a spare hour or even a half, it would be well spent taking a stroll through the arboretum at West Lodge Park. Whatever the weather conditions it is looking superb at the moment.

Although just about every specimen is clearly labelled, make sure you take one of the new guides with you which are available from reception in the hotel. I had the pleasure of taking a stroll through the collection recently and the first tree to catch my eye was a specimen of a newly planted **Himalayan Maple - *Acer sterculiaceum***. The very attractive coral pink colour of its young palmate foliage caught my eye and this will certainly be a specimen to watch in future as it develops and produces large fruit and good autumn colour.

Not many steps away you come to more **Indian bean trees (*Catalpas*)** than you will see in many a garden. One day, hopefully in the foreseeable future, we will be able to announce that the arboretum contains the National Collection of this genus. It's a bit like collecting stamps in that there is sometimes one or two which are more difficult to obtain. Although *Catalpas* are one of the trees which produce their foliage later in the spring than many other trees, their heart shaped leaves are really impressive.

With the demise of so many golden false acacias, should you be seeking an alternative with excellent gold foliage and also have adequate space in your garden, the **golden Indian bean tree (*Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea')** is certainly worth serious consideration. Although not in leaf at the moment there is a fine specimen a few yards from the Biblical Wall.

I'm sure magnolias need no introduction for they feature in so many gardens throughout the country. This year most that I have noticed have managed to avoid being scorched by the spring frosts. A magnolia that one does not encounter that frequently is **M. 'Butterflies'** which bears rather attractive pale yellow flowers.

Certainly of equal merit and more floriferous, is a very tidy tree which would be well suited to many a small garden that feature in so many new developments these days. I am referring to **Malus 'Evereste'** a **crab apple**, which has red flower buds that turn white as they develop. The small delicate fruits are orange/yellow and are delightful.



Make further progress in the direction of the entrance and you cannot help but admire the nothing short of immaculate foliage of the various European hornbeams (**Carpinus betulus**). National Collection status has been awarded to this group of fine trees which deserve to be more widely planted.

No notes about this special collection of trees would be complete with some reference to the ever expanding numbers of conifers represented. Those that caught my eye, and resulted in a slight detour off the meandering path, were the **Golden Deodar - Cedrus deodara 'Golden Horizon'** which exhibits its young foliage to perfection.



One of the **Swamp Cypresses - Taxodium distichum 'Pendens'** was just about to explode and is worth making a return visit in a few weeks time to admire its foliage. The huge genus of pines is well represented and there is probably a tree in the collection to cater for just about every taste. To select one particular tree is difficult, but I would be surprised if you cannot resist the sensational qualities displayed by the **Mexican weeping pine - Pinus patula**. It is a tree which is encountered rarely and its foliage is soft when touched.

There is very much more to see but we hope that these notes have whetted your appetite sufficiently to make a return visit one day maybe during a different season of the year.

If you are interested in **planting a commemorative tree** in the grounds this autumn, perhaps to celebrate the life of a loved one, or for a special occasion, please contact Grant Cook, Estates Manager on grantcook@bealeshotels.co.uk or 07973 538254

If you are interested in putting together a group for a **guided tour** of the Beale Arboretum, please contact Jane Gray - headoffice@bealeshotels.co.uk or 0208 216 3904 - Tours are free of charge midweek and £3.50 per person at the weekend.

If you are interested in **volunteering** for work in the Beale Arboretum, in exchange for a range of benefits at West Lodge Park Hotel, please contact Grant Cook, Estates Manager on grantcook@bealeshotels.co.uk or 07973 538254.

The Beale Arboretum - West Lodge Park - Cockfosters Road - Hadley Wood - Herts EN4 0PY

<http://www.bealeshotels.co.uk/westlodgepark/gardens/>

Paul Akers

Consultant to Beale Arboretum