



Trees and Plants in Crescent Park

1. Lime

The Crescent Gardens (east) side of the park is lined with a magnificent row of mature lime trees, and this row extends round to the Upper Crescent side. There are also two smaller lime trees at each entrance of the Lower Crescent side.



Limes at Crescent Gardens



Limes at Upper Crescent



Lime tree at Lower Crescent



Lime tree leaves

2. Oak

The park has two beautiful mature oak trees, one at each of the upper and lower sides, that clearly date to when the park was first laid out in the mid-1800s or before.



Oak at Lower Crescent



Oak at Upper Crescent

In the latter part of the twentieth century, Belfast City Council planted some young oak trees of differing leaf type and shape near the park perimeter, and twelve maple trees around the edge of the central lawn. Five of the maples have died in recent years and are due to be replaced



Columnar Oak at Lower Crescent



Oak at Lower Crescent



Field Maple (Acer Campestre)

3. Chinese Scholar Tree

The Chinese Scholar Tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*) is a member of the pea family, which can be appreciated from the distinctive shape of both the leaves and flowers. It is native only to China and Korea but is also sometimes known as the Japanese Pagoda Tree. Crescent Park has a beautiful mature example of this tree at the corner of Lower Crescent and Crescent Church, and a younger specimen at the corner of Upper Crescent and Crescent Church.



4. Silver Birch

On the Crescent Church side of the perimeter, there is a very tall Silver Birch (*Betula Pendula*), with a smaller one close by. The 'Pendula' part of the name refers to the way the branch ends hang down in a 'weeping' fashion. 'Silver' denotes the silver/grey bark which is particularly attractive in winter.



5. Willow

There are four willow trees in the park at the Crescent Church side. The common name is Sallow, or 'Sally' colloquially in Ireland. It thrives in acid soils and is common in Irish bog land. The flexible wood is popular for making canes, and the 'Sally Rod' was used by generations of strict Irish schoolmasters on disobedient pupils in the 19th and early 20th centuries. There are two of each of the following varieties:

Common Sallow (*Salix Atrocinerea*)



Apple-leaved Willow (*Salix Hastata*)

On the same side of the park are two other beautiful willows with smaller leaves and distinctive flowering spurs. The mottled grey bark is also very attractive.



6. Red Hawthorn

The park has just one large decorative flowering tree, but it certainly makes its mark. It is a red hawthorn tree (*Craetagus Laevigata*, 'Paul's Scarlet'), located at the corner of Crescent Gardens and Lower Crescent. Unlike the common white-flowered hawthorn, it does not produce berries.



7. Cotoneaster

The Tree Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster Frigidus* 'Cornubia') is sometimes known as the Himalayan Cotoneaster or Giant Snowberry. The berries appear in late summer and will stay on the tree all winter or until the birds eat them! There is a mature specimen of this attractive tree half way up the Crescent Gardens side of the park.



8. Shrubs

Mahonia Japonica

At the corner of Crescent Gardens and Lower Crescent there are three 'Mahonia Japonica' shrubs. They produce welcome sprays of bright yellow flowers in winter, followed by blue/black berries. Mahonia bushes are beneficial for wildlife because in winter there are few other sources of nectar for pollinating insects, and the berries are popular with blackbirds and thrushes.



Neighbours

Crescent Park is maintained by Belfast City Council with very few shrubs in order to ensure its openness and visibility from all sides, but it does get some welcome displays of overhanging flowers from our neighbours in Crescent Church, such as the Fuchsia and Mexican Orange Blossom below.



9. Bedding

Belfast City Council parks and gardens provide and maintain planters, baskets and boxes during the summer months. The 2022 display below made colourful use of petunias, begonias and lobelia.



10. Lawn

The park is laid out in lawn, and although it is predominantly lawn grass, in the late autumn it provides interest for fungi enthusiasts, who have counted over a dozen identifiable types of mushrooms and other fungi. The areas underneath the trees where grass is sparse become a habitat for different varieties of moss.

