



Tree bark discovery trail

A bark-spotting adventure in Horsham Park



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Trees wear their bark all year round, whatever the weather. Come and explore nine very different kinds of bark on a walk around Horsham Park. All the trees are right next to the paths, so you won't get too muddy. The full route is 1.8km, but you can make it shorter.

Be a bark detective!

- **Make a bark rubbing.** Hold a sheet of paper flat against the bark, then rub the side of a wax crayon over it. Watch the secret shapes and patterns appear! At home, put your rubbings together to make a collage.
- **Spot the minibeasts.** What creatures do you think might be living inside tree bark? Can you spot any birds feeding on them?
- **Be kind to trees.** Gentle hands only – never peel or carve the bark.

Start: Head in through the North Street entrance.

1. Silver birches: the paper-white trees

Look for the stunning white trees with bark as thin and papery as a sheet of paper. These multi-stemmed silver birches grow from the rockery bed behind the bus shelter and run into the park beside the subway. On sunny days they really shine. You can find single-stemmed ones near the Human Nature Garden too.

Try this: How many trunks can you count growing from just one tree?

☐ **Found it!**



2. Redwoods: the squashy bark

Touch the bark of the Giant Redwood at North Street. It feels soft and spongy, and it's full of tough, stringy fibres. This thick bark is like a fire-resistant coat, protecting the tree from forest fires.

There are more redwoods in the Human Nature Garden, and a couple along the perimeter path between North Parade and the Pavilions.

Try this: Test some of the other big cone-bearing trees (conifers) in the park. Is their bark as soft?

☐ **Found it!**



Next: Walk to the Park House Sensory Garden. Go in, walk through the garden and out of the south exit behind the Café to see the big tree in the middle of the car park.

3. London planes: the camouflage bark

This bark flakes off in patches, giving the tree a camouflage pattern, like a soldier's uniform. Shedding its bark helps the tree get rid of pests and dirt.

Long ago, after the Industrial Revolution, city air was full of sooty smoke. London planes coped brilliantly, which is why you'll find lots of them in London and other cities.

Try this: How many different colours can you spot in the patches?

☐ **Found it!**



Next: Walk under the arch between the café and Park Barn, and look to the right of the bandstand.

4. Corsican pines: the cracked bark

Find the tall, stately Corsican pines near the picnic benches. Look at the deep cracks in their bark – they're called fissures. Chunks of bark can break off easily, so be gentle.

Try this: Follow one long crack with your eyes. Which way does it twist?

☐ **Found it!**



Next: Follow the perimeter path clockwise to the tennis courts.

5. Common limes: the mossy bark

The bark here is pale grey-brown and fairly smooth, but with wobbly ridges. Look for green patches of moss. Then look at the bottom of the trunk, where new shoots pop up – they have to be cut back.

Did you know? Lime bark can be split into strips to make strong rope!

Try this: Can you find a patch of moss on the trunk?

☐ **Found it!**



Choose your ending ...

When you reach Jubilee car park, you can finish the walk by heading across the park northwards, towards the pond and the playground by the Pavilions.

Or keep exploring

Continue along the path to North Parade. Where the path bends to the right (behind the REC building) there is a group of different kinds of trees. How many different barks can you spot?

6. Monkey puzzle tree: the spiky bark

Don't do a bark rubbing on this tree! Look with your eyes, not your hands.

The trunk is spiky, just like the leaves. That keeps the tree safe from anything that wants to eat it or climb it.

Try this: How is this trunk different from every other bark you've seen so far?

☐ **Found it!**



Next: Continue along the perimeter path, parallel to North Parade.

7. Beech: the smooth bark

Halfway along, next to a pedestrian entrance from North Parade, is a beech tree with super-smooth bark. It's thin and grey, and often has horizontal markings.

Because it's so smooth, some people carve their initials into it. Ouch! That damages the tree, so please never do it.

Try this: Gently feel the bark with your palm. Is it the smoothest one so far?

☐ **Found it!**



Next: Follow the path as it turns right to run parallel to Hurst Road, walking towards the Skate Park.

8. Oaks: the craggy bark

There are lots of oaks in the park. When you reach the part of the path near the back of the hospital, you'll find some right next to the path. Their bark is rough and craggy. Look for bulges and circles on the trunks where branches have fallen off.

Keep your eyes peeled for acorns on the ground, especially in autumn.

Try this: Find a bulge or circle where a branch used to be. What does it look like to you?

☐ **Found it!**



9. Holly: the warty bark

There are lots of holly bushes and slim-stemmed holly trees along the path. Compare their bark with the oaks – it's much smoother! But look closely and you'll often spot little bumps, like warts.

Try this: How many warty bumps can you count on one patch of trunk?

☐ **Found it!**



Finish: End your walk at the playground. You've earned it!