

Indian Bean Tree

Highfield Park Tree Trail: Number 17

Latin/Botanical Name: *Catalpa bignoides*

Range: Native of south-east USA, widely planted in Europe except the north

Height: to 20m

Uses: Ornamental, widely planted in parks, gardens and streets for its conspicuous large white flowers. The wood is brittle and hard, but does not rot easily and was used for fence posts and for 'USA railroad' ties.

Description: a deciduous, broadly domed tree, grey-brown bark becomes fissured. Leaves are heart shaped up to 25cm long. Flowers are white bell-shaped with purple and yellow spots. The fruit is a bean-like capsule, thin and up to 40cm long, the 'bean' of the name.

Interesting fact: It is not from India and does not grow beans! The 'Indian' part of the name refers to a native American tribe called Catawba, the European botanist, who first described the tree, incorrectly transcribed the name as *Catalpa*.



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