

Medlar

There are several examples in the park, this one is near the Cell Barnes orchard

Latin/Botanical Name: *Mespilus germanica*

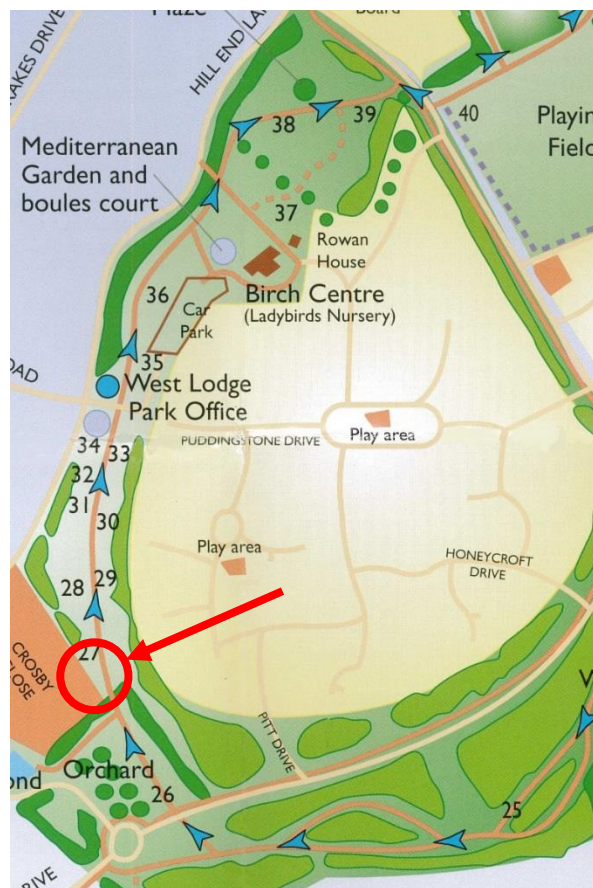
Range: Native to south-east Europe and west Asia, naturalised as far north as south-east England

Height: to 6m

Uses: The flesh can be eaten straight from the fruit with a teaspoon, a delicacy with wine, port or cheese, although they are probably best known, for being made into a jelly or cheese, when the fruits are stewed whole and passed through a sieve.

Description: Most commonly a spreading densely tangled shrub. Young shoots densely hairy, oblong leaves 5-15cm, dull yellowish green with a crinkled look. It produces self-fertile solitary flowers in May, white/pink with reddish anthers. Sepals (2-3cm) are longer than the petals, persisting after the petals fall. The fruit is roughly apple shaped and held within sepals.

Interesting Fact: It is said the fruit has to rot before it can be eaten but there is a difference between rotting (which makes a fruit unpalatable) and "bletting", the softening process which turns a medlar's tartness to sugar. The flesh becomes a creamy brown puree – giving you processed fruit straight from the tree!



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