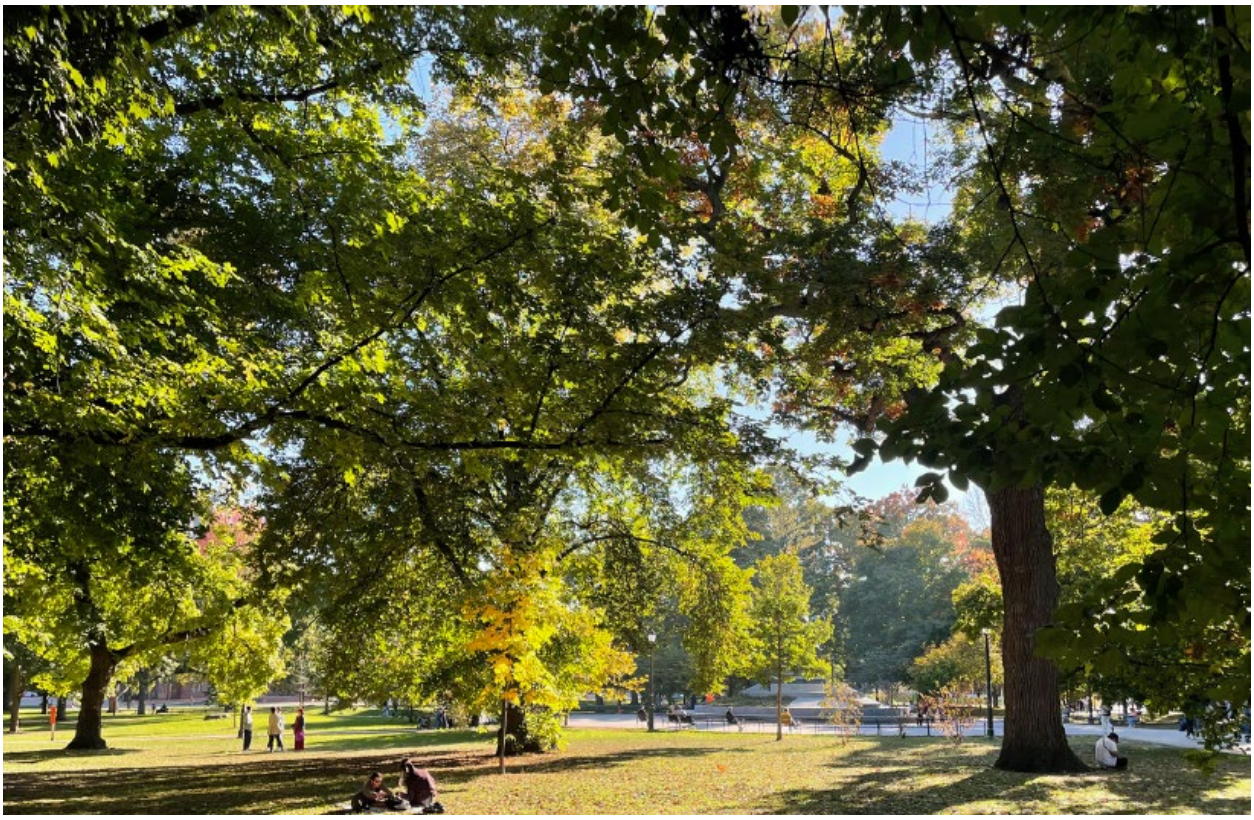
Trees

Queen's Park North Revitalization Info Sheet



View of Queen's Park North in the Fall

Queen's Park North is home to a lot of remarkable trees — over 350 of them! They are one of the park's defining features, offering ecological, cultural and aesthetic benefits, and make a significant contribution to the City's canopy cover.

Any changes to Queen's Park North must be informed by a comprehensive understanding of its trees. We know compaction from heavy foot traffic has impacted root zones in the past. Our aim is to protect existing mature and healthy trees and their root zones and plan for the successive health of the trees and ecology in Queen's Park North.

This Info Sheet is part of a series of Info Sheets created to support the City-led engagement process for the revitalization of Queen's Park North. The content in this Info Sheet was provided by Janet Rosenburg & Studio Inc. and Trophic Design, firms retained by the Weston Foundations, and working collaboratively with the City of Toronto.

Here is what we've done, what we know so far, and what it means for future thinking about the trees in Queen's Park North

What we've done

The Queen's Park North Revitalization consultant team includes professional arborists and ecologists who are studying the park's ecological history as well as the health and condition of its trees. So far, we've focused on researching and understanding things like the diversity of the trees, their health and condition, and their cultural significance. Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) will be incorporated in these findings and in future ongoing educational programming and stewardship, embodying the principle of Etauptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing).

Image depicts the sonic tomography process; it is not an image of work within Queen's Park North.

Biodiversity and tree condition

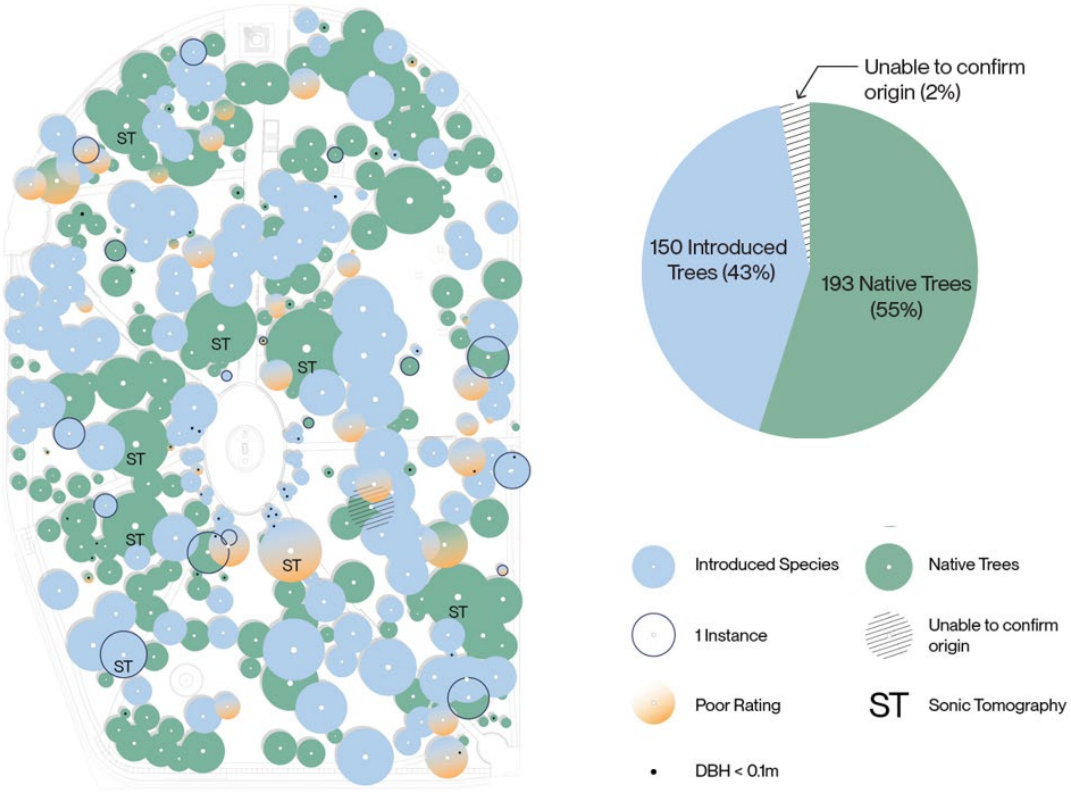


Diagram depicting the ratio of native trees and introduced tree species in QPN. Source: Graphic above created by Janet Rosenberg & Studio Inc. in collaboration with Cohen & Master Tree and Shrub Services Ltd.

Queen's Park North is located within the Bay-Cloverhill neighbourhood, an area with an average canopy cover of 19%, with a tree equity score of 87 out of 100. The canopy cover (defined as tree and shrub) of the park is approximately 72%.

From our analysis so far, we've learned that most trees in the park (55%) are of a species native to this area, while introduced species represent about 43%. The origin of the remaining trees (2%) is unknown.

The park is home to a remarkable level of tree diversity: we've recorded 62 different species! A significant portion of this diversity comes from recent plantings in 2019, and many of those trees include only a few individuals per species. There are 17 species with just one individual and 11 species where there are just two individuals. Species diversity reduces the amount and impact of tree loss due to pests, diseases, or environmental stressors. Having multiple trees of a variety of species helps ensure a resilient canopy.

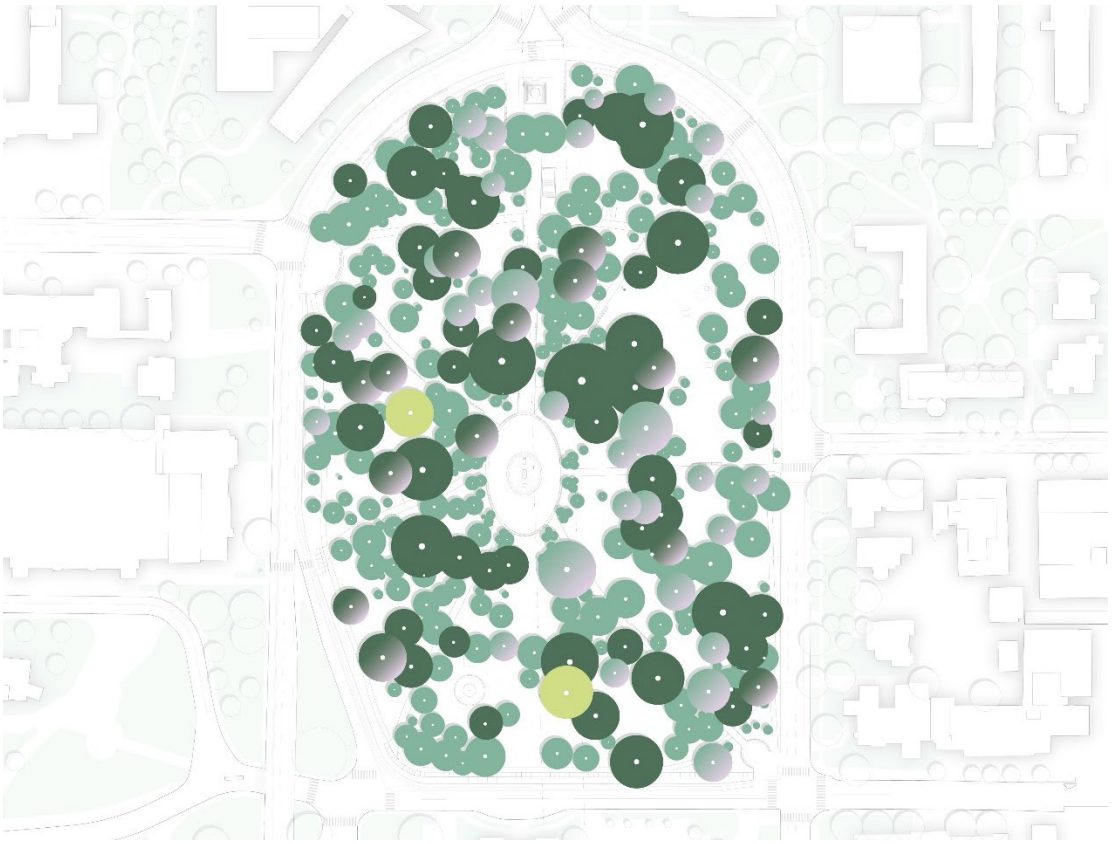


Diagram depicting diversity of tree species in QPN. Source: Graphic above created by Janet Rosenberg & Studio Inc. in collaboration with Cohen & Master Tree and Shrub Services Ltd.

Our work has revealed that there are some very high priority trees in Queen's Park North, including those that are very old, rare, endangered, and/or have beautiful or unique forms.

Trees spotlight

Here are just some of the species present in Queen's Park North.

Oaks (Quercus rubra and alba)

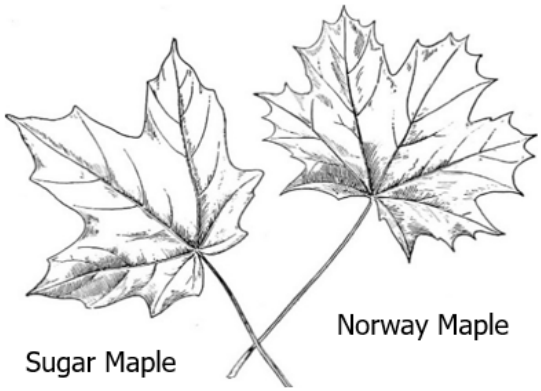
Both Red and White Oaks appear in Queen's Park North, with Red Oaks being the most prevalent species in the park. They are the park's largest (by trunk diameter measured at breast height or DBH) and oldest trees, with some over a century old! In Anishinaabe traditions, Red Oaks were used as place of gathering and acorns were used as a traditional source of food.

Butternut (Juglans cinerea)

Butternut tree leaves and fruit

There are two Butternut trees in Queen's Park North. Butternut trees are considered endangered in Ontario because of the risk from Butternut Canker fungal disease. These trees are exceedingly rare and are protected by special rules. The Butternut tree also has significant cultural value amongst Anishinaabe people as well as other Indigenous peoples as it provides gifts like food (edible nuts), medicine (for treating injuries, digestive issues, and more), and materials (dye from husks and bark). The Butternut tree is also traditionally part of the "grandfather" tree system.

Norway Maples (*Acer platanoides*)



Norway Maples are the second most prevalent species of tree in the park, making up about 13% of all trees. The Norway Maple, introduced to North America in the late 1700s, gained popularity in the post-World War II era because it grew fast and could withstand urban conditions, like salt and pollution. However, the Norway Maple's fast growth and dense, shallow root systems have historically allowed these species to outcompete native species for light, water, and nutrients. These traits have had an impact on local biodiversity.

The Norway Maple is often mistaken for Canada's national symbol, the Sugar Maple but there are clear differences between the two. The Norway Maple features a dense,

heavy canopy with thick, upright-leaning branches and bulbous buds. In contrast, the Sugar Maple has a more open crown with slender, fine twigs, smooth reddish-brown branches, and pointed buds that are also reddish-brown in color. Norway maple sap is milky white, while sugar maple sap is clear. The Sugar Maple has significant cultural and ceremonial uses for both Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee people. Currently nine Sugar Maples live in Queen's Park North.

What our work means for the Queen's Park North revitalization

Our analysis of Queen's Park North's trees and ecology will help us identify site-specific ecological restoration opportunities, develop stewardship strategies, and explore public education programming opportunities that could bring ecology alive to visitors.