



### Sycamore

Sycamores are commonly seen in both metropolitan and rural areas and are easily recognized by peeling bark that makes their trunks look like military camouflage. The American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) is native to North America, but the sycamore that is growing in the Realty Plot appears to be a London Plane tree. This is a hybrid species that originated in England after American Sycamores were brought there in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The English discovered that the hybrid species was remarkably tolerant of the dirty air that resulted from the Industrial Revolution. The London Plane tree (*Platanus acerifolia*) became a reliable and popular street tree in many European cities and was eventually introduced to North America.

The London Plane tree that is growing along Rugby Road at 1156 Stratford Road seems to be tolerant of city air as well. It is one of the larger trees growing in the street lawn areas of the Realty Plot, having a diameter of over 30 inches. Look for the camouflage-patterned trunk, lobed leaves, and one to several fruits dangling on long stems.



### Copper Beech

The Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*) is a variant of the European Beech. First discovered in Germany in the late 1700's, this tree became popular in the early 1900's in the US. Because of its large size it was well suited for houses with substantial front yards. At just 20 years of age, these trees could be nearly 50 feet high and wide. The purple color of the leaves is due to a mutation that results in a higher than normal concentration of the pigment anthocyanin which masks the green color of chlorophyll.

Copper Beeches can be found growing on several properties on Lowell Road (1171, 1374, 1436) and on 1260 Stratford Road. They can easily be identified even in the winter by their grey elephant-like trunks. The coppery purple leaves are 2 to 4 inches long and about 2 inches wide and fruits are triangular with a spiky covering that has four lobes. The oil produced by these seeds is supposedly quite tasty, albeit poisonous at high concentrations.



### Metasequoia (Dawn Redwood)

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* is considered to be a living fossil. It was one of the most predominant and widespread species growing in forests many millions of years ago. The species was thought to be extinct until it was discovered growing in a remote area of southwestern China over 50 years ago. Since then it has been planted in numerous arboreta and has become a popular ornamental tree in all temperate regions worldwide.

The Metasequoia is related to the giant sequoias and coastal redwoods, but it has its own separate genus. Unlike those trees, the Metasequoia is deciduous, losing its leaves in the autumn. In the spring the new leaves are bright green, and they turn yellow then cinnamon brown before dropping. The crown is conical in shape. The leaves are soft and feathery needles. The tree can produce cones the size of marbles.

The tree is a vigorous grower, exceeding 115 feet in height and 3 feet in diameter by the age of 50 years. Given the dimensions of the Metasequoia growing in the front yard of 1286 Wendell Avenue, this tree appears to be a relatively younger specimen.



### Japanese Maple

The Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) is the royalty of ornamental trees. It is widely recognized for its elegant and graceful structure. The delicate shape of its foliage is highlighted by the stunning colors of its fall foliage. Although the Japanese Maple is not native to North America, it has adapted to regions across the United States. It has an undemanding nature with non-invasive compact root systems. It prefers well-drained soil and some protection from scorching sun and drying winds.

The Realty Plot enjoys the beauty of a number of Japanese Maples. Perhaps one of the oldest of these exceeds 100 years of age and commands attention at the center of a landscape at 1181 Avon Road.

It is alleged that a Japanese Maple tree at 1176 Stratford Road was given to Irving Langmuir, who lived there at the time, by the government of Japan. Langmuir worked as a chemist and physicist at the General Electric Company from 1909 until 1950 and won the Nobel Prize in 1932. His house was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976.



### Ginkgo Tree

The Ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) is an attractive, tall-growing specimen tree. This tree possesses, in addition to uncommon segmented branching, an unusual fan-shaped leaf. The spectacular foliage bursts into a beautiful gold coloring in autumn. The Ginkgo may be the oldest living tree species on our planet. It is a relic from dinosaur times and was almost eradicated by the Ice Age. China was the only place it survived, and for centuries it has been exploited for its medicinal qualities.

The Ginkgo tree is tolerant of air pollution, resistant to pests, drought-resistant and it stands up to other environmental stresses. These positive qualities can make it a good choice for a street tree. However, the female trees do produce an odiferous and messy fruit. The Ginkgo tree most noticeable in the Realty Plot is a female that drops its foul-smelling slippery fruits to the sidewalk in the Autumn.

### TREE LOCATIONS

- Sycamore:** 1156 Stratford Road
- Copper Beech:** 1171, 1374, and 1436 Lowell, 1260 Stratford Road
- Metasequoia:** 1286 Wendell Avenue
- Ginkgo:** 1050 Avon Road
- Japanese Maple:** 1181 Avon Road
- Japanese Maple (Langmuir):** 1176 Stratford Road

## Notable Trees of The Realty Plot



As you walk through the Realty Plot, you are in one of the most densely forested sections of Schenectady. This part of the urban forest is notable for the number of trees in both the street lawn between the roadway and the sidewalk and in our front and back yards. In addition to the greater than normal number of trees, we also have many different varieties. Within this forest, there are several examples of unique or unusual trees and of trees that have been growing in this location for over a hundred years. Some of these trees are actually older than any of the houses that give our neighborhood its historic character.

This brochure is the first of a series that we hope will introduce you to some of the striking trees in our neighborhood. We hope you will enjoy the opportunity to walk through the Realty Plot and to find the specific examples that we describe here.

The Realty Plot Tree Committee  
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