

## ADVICE REGARDING CANTERBURY PLANE TREES

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12 November 1999

Dear Mrs

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the *Platanus x hispanica* (London Plane) in the Cathedral grounds.

As the tree is a hybrid, it is not possible to propagate it sexually and so it must be propagated asexually, usually by cuttings or by grafting.

This tree appears to be grafted onto on to a rootstock of *Platanus orientalis* (one of the hybrid parents). Probably Dutch, as they were pretty active in the late 1800's. The graft union has produced lots of small buds and possibly suckers that have either aborted or been pruned off mechanically, resulting in the "knobbles" or unusual growth around the trunk.

This will not harm the tree in any way and gives it character.

It will be difficult to place an age on the tree, as growth will depend on site conditions etc. but I would hazard a guess at the turn of the century or earlier, certainly pre 1900. You must delve in to the archives to see if there is any recorded info. about it.

I hope that this information is useful to you as a guide, maybe someday I will visit the Cathedral and see it for my own eyes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK' or 'TKH'.

Tony Kirkham  
Head of Horticultural Operations and Support Section.

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## 2013-1761 Re- Platanus enquiry

1 message

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**Fred Rumsey**  
To: David Lewis

28 November 2013 15:53

Dear David,

Looking in the Collins Tree Guide by Owen Johnson and David More – which I find to be the most useful and portable tree book I see that they reckon that several distinct clones exist of London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) [although one should note that considerable controversy still surrounds the hybrid status of this plant] – your plant they have recognised as the Baobab Plane because of the very swollen lower trunk. There suggestion is that this growth form has been brought about by a viral infection. As such it would be unlikely to be inherited by seedlings from these parents but these unusual trees could be propagated through vegetative means and it is possible that the virus (if that is the cause) could be transmitted by insect vectors to other Plane trees.

I hope that helps

Best wishes