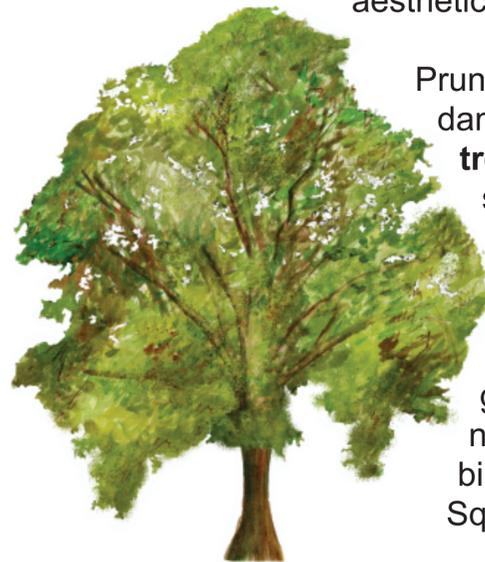


Veteran Trees

There are many Oak trees (**Quercus robur**) in Morden Park that pre-date the establishment of the park. Some of these Oak trees may be more than 200 years old and represent parkland and field boundaries from a past age. We define these as **veteran trees**. By virtue of their age and past history, veteran trees are particularly important for their aesthetic and heritage values.



Oak tree

Pruning and storm damage leaves **veteran trees** with features such as holes, hollows, and damaged and decayed areas. These provide a great variety of nesting habitats for birds, bats and Grey Squirrels.

The Grey Squirrel is considered a woodland pest, as they strip bark to reach the sweet tree sap underneath and occupy nesting habitat in place of other species.

The veteran tree is a community.

The decaying wood of **veteran trees** provides habitat for invertebrates (beetles, moths, ants etc.), which in turn provide a food source for other wildlife.

Fungi found on **veteran trees** are particularly sensitive to moisture and temperature. Species such as The **Beefsteak fungus (Fistulina hepatica)** may actually aid the longevity of **veteran trees** by encouraging trees to shed diseased parts and by competing against other more damaging fungi, such as the parasitical **Ganoderma species**.

Veteran trees require different management techniques compared to street and garden trees. For example, **dead wood** may be left in the crowns, perhaps with bramble beneath to reduce any risk to the public.



Grey squirrel



Beefsteak fungus

Dead wood is also allowed to lie and decay beneath the tree, or in **eco-piles** in the woodland areas. This provides further habitats for many different plant and animal species, including lichen, fungi and invertebrates.



Pipistrelle bat

Creative woodland management can also provide opportunities to enhance the diversity value of **veteran trees**. Coronet cuts leave ragged, torn surfaces and provide more varied microhabitats, niches and shelter for a wide range of species.

Veteran trees are not moribund or dying. Although parts of the tree may be dead, other parts may be thriving. Each year a tree renews itself with a layer of fresh wood, new leaves and twigs. If managed appropriately, our **veteran trees** may still be here in another 1,000 years.

For more information on Morden Park visit www.merton.gov.uk/mordenpark

