

[Halifax Public Gardens Victoria Jubilee Fountain Area Audio Tour Transcript](#)

Welcome to our audio tour of the Victoria Jubilee Fountain Area. This tour explores the beautiful northwest corner of the Halifax Public Gardens and highlights the unique elements of this area's horticultural, ornamental and landscape design.

During the tour, enhanced verbal descriptions and detailed directions guiding you from place to place are used to create a more accessible experience. If desired, you can obtain a map of the route at the visitor information desk inside Horticultural Hall or download from the "audio tours" page on the halifaxpublicgardens.ca website.

We begin the tour at the gate located at the northwest corner of the gardens, at the intersection of Summer and Sackville Streets, just across from the historic Camp Hill Cemetery. If you haven't reached the gate, simply pause the audio on your mobile device and resume playback when you've reached this entrance.

[The Victoria Jubilee Fountain Area of the Public Gardens](#) (titles shown in blue are for reference only, not stated in audio)

Upon entering the Gardens, move to the large, prominent information display panel labeled Halifax Public Gardens, located to your right. As you pass the gate entrance, it's 6 metres away towards the right, on a diagonal heading of 2 o'clock.

Beyond the information display is a stunning vista - accented by ornate garden beds, beautiful trees, and the near-constant presence of diligent gardeners keeping up with the extensive maintenance this Gardenesque-style Victorian garden demands. The area's focal point, in a prominent position in the centre of this area, is a splendid, richly dark-green painted, classically designed fountain; accented in gold and topped by an impression of the Roman water nymph Egeria. Beyond this open vista lies Griffin's Pond, the largest body of water in the Gardens. This encompasses the area we'll be visiting during this audio tour.

The Halifax Public Gardens is reputed to be the last remaining formal Victorian Gardenesque-style garden to be found in North America. This identity inherently ties the Gardens to Queen Victoria, who reigned from 1837 to 1901, with several dedications to her found throughout the Gardens. The area which we are currently within is known as the "Victoria Jubilee Fountain Area," and we begin our tour by discussing the origins of this part of the Gardens. There is a bench nearby, on the other side of the path if you wish to sit while we take a few minutes to introduce this history.

The British established the fortified settlement of Halifax in 1749 on ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq people. In the years that followed, the British constructed a fortress, known as the Citadel, on the hilltop near the harbour, to guard the town, which lay between the hill and the harbour. In winter, the fortified summit is visible from here, beyond the Gardens and slightly to your left. After the trees leaf out, there are glimpses of the grassy hillside rising towards the Citadel.

Early in its history the forested areas on the slopes and flats around the Citadel were cleared, to provide pasture for livestock, a place to accommodate troops in tents when needed, and to allow the fort's defenders an unobstructed view of the surrounding area. In 1763, Britain's King George III granted 235 acres of this cleared area as "Common land... to and for the use of the inhabitants of the Town of Halifax... forever." These lands are known as the Halifax Common.

As the thriving port town of Halifax grew, citizens designated parts of the Halifax Common for specific uses, and gardens were among their priorities. The 1837 founding of the privately held Nova Scotia Horticultural Society Gardens, which now makes up the southern half of the Public Gardens, is discussed in our audio tour of the same name. Our Weeping Tree Area audio tour examines the 1867 creation of the Halifax Public Gardens, on what is now the northeast corner of the Gardens – on the far side of Griffin's Pond. In 1874, these two established gardens were combined with this northwest corner, then a waste area filled with brambles and various debris, to form the 16-acre Halifax Public Gardens we enjoy today.

A popular landscape design style of the time, known as 'Gardenesque,' was chosen as a unifying theme for the newly combined areas. Some general features of Gardenesque design include symmetry, a focus on artistically designed displays of annual flowers, carefully maintained lawn spaces, and the inclusion of various dedications and memorials. We'll talk more about Gardenesque design and the history of this area later in the tour.

Before moving on from here, a word or two about Camp Hill Cemetery, across Summer Street behind you. Established in 1844, it's the burial site of some notable Nova Scotians, including civil and women's rights activist Viola Desmond, the journalist and Premier of Nova Scotia Joseph Howe, brewer and politician Alexander Keith and Admiral George Clarence Jones of the Royal Canadian Navy. We have 2 audio tours featuring the cemetery on the web site of the Friends of the Public Gardens, if you would like to learn more about this historic site and the stories of some of the people interred there.

From the information display, move to your left, and take the path that runs along the perimeter of the Gardens, straight ahead from the gate. Doing so, you'll have Sackville Street on your left-hand side. Proceed for just 15 metres, and then take the first path that branches right, for another 8 metres.

Here you'll find on your right, an upright, slender tree with a distinctly drooping appearance, with its branches cascading towards the ground. This is a purple fountain beech tree, planted in 2022 as part of "The Queen's Green Canopy" initiative to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's reign. The tree has simple leaves that are a glossy, deep purple colour in early spring, fading to green in the summer, and turning copper in the fall. The purple fountain beech is prized in landscape gardening for its dramatic, narrow, upright appearance. It can grow to 10 metres tall and can live up to 120 years. We'll refer to this tree later in the tour.

Continue along this path for a further 8 metres, and you will find yourself between two Oak trees, both with a distinct naval association, as befits a city and port with a strong naval heritage. Both of them display a metal plaque at their base.

On your right is a Red Oak, which dates from 1993. It was planted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, and particularly to honour the sailors of the Canadian Merchant Navy, who played an outsized role in that historic conflict. The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest battle of the Second World War, fought over 7 years throughout the Atlantic Ocean and encompassed the efforts of allied navies, including Canada, to keep Britain supplied with everything needed to fight the war in Europe against Nazi Germany. Most of the resupply convoys departed from right here in Halifax Harbour. The Canadian Merchant Navy lost a total of 59 ships during this battle, mainly to German submarines, and one in seven Merchant Seamen died - the highest casualty rate of all the fighting services during the Second World War.

On your left is a second Red Oak tree, this one dedicated in 1985 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy, whose main base is here in Halifax. It was planted by the officers and sailors of HMCS Scotian, Halifax's Naval Reserve unit, one of 24 such units located in cities across Canada. The Naval Reserve has been a fixture in Halifax since its founding in 1925, with Scotian being commissioned in 1947.

The Oak tree is highly appropriate for naval tributes such as these. Oak was the preferred timber for building warships for over two centuries, throughout the age of sail, primarily for its strength and durability. Vast amounts were consumed – around 6,000 trees were needed to build a single man-of-war. Such was its importance to the navy that the official march of the Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy and many other Commonwealth navies is entitled "Heart of Oak."

The Red Oak is the only species of oak that is native to Nova Scotia. While no longer in demand for warships, being a high-density wood, both strong and beautiful, it is prized for items such as furniture and wine barrels, as well as for construction timber and flooring. Oak trees can grow to over 30 metres tall and can last many hundreds of years: some living over a thousand years.

Next, continue along the path for a further 15 metres until the path forks. Take the right fork and keep to the right for another 38 metres as until you reach a gravel path on your right.

While you travel to the next stop, a bit more information on Memorials in the Gardens.

Memorials and dedications are a staple in Victorian gardens. They complement the spiritually renewing, contemplative atmosphere which landscape designers sought to achieve in a Gardenesque-style garden. Following the custom in Victorian times, major tributes in our Gardens honour the monarchy, contemporary and military events, and prominent people and organizations such as the North West Mounted Police.

Over 230 memorials have been placed in the Halifax Public Gardens at various points during its history and more than 100 of them are still present today. Most are marked by plaques and come in a variety of forms – trees, flowerbeds, and carpet beds making up horticultural tributes, while benches and fountains are just some of the structures with dedications.

Tree dedications in the Gardens were very popular, but since Hurricane Juan in 2003, when 80 mature trees in the Gardens were toppled by high winds, most dedications now take the form of plaques mounted on benches. Many benches too were damaged by the same hurricane and were refurbished courtesy of the Royal Canadian Navy based here in Halifax.

Please pause the audio if you've not reached the intersection with the gravel path. You'll know you're in the correct spot if you see a pair of magnolia trees, each with an identification sign at its base, flanking the gravel path on your right, while on your left stands the fountain, with ornate garden beds and a prominent shrub – a rhododendron nearby.

Elizabeth Magnolias

The beautiful magnolia trees on either side of the pathway are Elizabeth Magnolias, a plant which is regarded as being among the finest of the yellow-flowered magnolias. The tree is a cross between the cucumbertree magnolia, native to southern Ontario and the eastern United States, and the Yulan magnolia of east Asia. Though the context of this area of the Gardens would suggest so, the tree is not named after Queen Elizabeth, but rather Elizabeth Van Brunt; an influential benefactor of the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens who aided in the research of the tree. It was introduced as a cultivar in 1977 at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and it was one of the first yellow magnolias on the market.

While not connected to the British monarchy, the tree does have a distant royal history. One of its parent plants - the Yulan magnolia – was highly regarded in ancient China and was planted in the grounds of the Emperor's Palace during the Tang Dynasty. The blooms were revered for their beauty, and their startling resemblance to a bird.

Now, face towards the fountain, with the ornate garden beds surrounding it.

The large shrub immediately in front of you is a rhododendron of the PJM group of hybrids, named for Peter J. Mezzitt, the father of its developer in 1939, the Massachusetts horticulturalist Ed Mezzitt. The plant is exceptionally winter hardy, and it displays foliage year-round, the leaves changing from a glossy green in the summer to a lustrous dark mahogany during the winter months. Brilliant purple/ pink flowers bloom in clusters of 4 to 9 flowers in the spring, and the plant can grow up to 5 metres tall.

The Serpentine and Scroll Beds

We'll now discuss the stunning artistic beds that accentuate this area, with graceful curves and streaks of vibrant colour, offset by wide expanses of carefully maintained lawns and curvilinear paths that help emphasize the intricate details of the plants on display.

The Gardenesque style, mentioned earlier and characteristic of Victorian era gardens, is intended to enhance nature through human design – and it is on full display here. Its goal is to display the art of the garden and, when introduced in the 19th century, it was a radical break from the preference until then for natural-looking gardens as well as the strict regimentation of the formal garden. It calls for the incorporation of artistic principles such as contrast, composition, and symmetry. Creating a sense of elegance is important, and the style celebrates both the natural and formal use of plants.

Embedded into the lawn spaces behind you to your left and right, you can see serpentine beds that mirror each other. These beds are over a hundred years old and are planted annually. Serpentine beds are a style of narrow, curvilinear bed, which “snake” across a lawn. The gardeners of the Public Gardens take the “snaking” aspect to another level, adorning the “head” of the bed, or “snake,” with silver globes for eyes. Two additional, symmetrically planted serpentine beds can be found on the opposite side of the central fountain.

Directly in front of you is one of four elaborate “scroll” beds planted symmetrically around the four sides of the fountain. Scroll beds are also quite curvilinear, although they depict a letter or other text. The beds found here around the fountain depict the letter “E” in cursive - for Queen Elizabeth II, the reigning British and Canadian monarch until her death in September 2022.

As you move to the next stop, you will be on part of the Queen Elizabeth II Walkway. Dedicated in 2018, this section of the walkway guides visitors through the flowing scroll beds surrounding the Victoria Jubilee Fountain. The walkway is meant to connect the two monarchs and you can hear more about its dedication on our Royal Connections audio tour.

We now move closer to the fountain. From where you are standing facing the fountain, turn left and proceed 12 metres until you reach the first path to the right. Take the right path for 10 metres until the path splits, with the right fork going under the decorative iron trellis. Take the right fork for 8 metres, and stop as you reach an intersection, with Golden Chain Trees on either side of path, and the fountain before you.

Golden Chain Trees

When in bloom, these Golden Chain Trees close to the Jubilee Fountain dazzle the eyes. The trees are representative of the Victorian Gardenesque idea of the “specimen planting.” A tree, or other plant, notable for its beauty, rarity or some other uniqueness which would deviate it from the “norm” is highlighted by being planted on its own, with enough space for visitors to properly observe and appreciate it.

What’s commonly referred to as the Golden Chain Tree in North America is a hybrid of one of the only two species in the genus Laburnum, both native to Southern Europe. A brief blooming period comes in late spring, bringing stunning, dangling, golden-yellow blossoms in large quantities. The 10 to 20-inch-long blossoms possess a notable fragrance, which attracts hummingbirds and bees.

As noted on the plaque on your right, this Golden Chain Tree was planted on Injured Workers Day, April 28th, 1992, to memorialize all workers injured or killed in the workplace. The Golden Chain tree on the left was also planted as a dedication, albeit without a plaque. It was planted in 1994 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Multi-Organ Transplant Program, located appropriately at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre here in Halifax, which serves all Atlantic Canada. At the time of the dedication, a poignant ceremony was held here, attended by ninety members from organ donor families.

At this point you are at an intersection of the path that encircles the fountain. From here, take the pathway heading left, or clockwise, a quarter of the way around the fountain for 10 metres until you reach, on the left-hand side, a tree lilac. It can be identified by its upward-curving trunk split into two.

Japanese Tree Lilac

Aside from its beautiful and unique form, this tree lilac can also be appreciated by visitors as a shady spot from which to view the fountain. The Japanese tree lilac is a member of the olive family; Oleaceae, and the only member in its genus that attains a “tree-like” form and size.

The Japanese tree lilac was introduced into cultivation in 1876, and it’s often used as a specimen tree because of its notable appearance. While most lilacs have untextured grey bark,

the Japanese tree lilac typically has rich brown bark, with horizontal lines. The Japanese tree lilac also blooms in early summer, rather than late spring like most lilacs.

Further information on Japanese plantings and cultural connections can be found by listening to our Japanese Plantings and Connections audio tour.

Before we move on, take note of the lovely Ivory Silk Japanese tree lilac variety to your left, with a plaque at its base. This tree, planted in 1998, was dedicated in memory of a young child. On September 29th, 2003, after Hurricane Juan devastated Halifax and wreaked havoc on the Public Gardens, people came to peer through the iron perimeter fence to see the damage. One of them was the father of the young child to whom this tree is dedicated. He told a reporter that day that he came to check that this tree especially had survived intact. He said that the tree was a little shrine for his family and that the Gardens were, for them, a sentimental place. This speaks to the power and significance of these memorials.

Now continue in the same direction, heading clockwise around on the path circling the fountain for 20 metres until you find yourself in front of the stunning Victoria Jubilee Fountain with the statue atop facing you. Please pause the audio until you reach this spot.

The Victoria Jubilee Fountain

As a landscape design feature, the Victoria Jubilee Fountain serves as the central focal point for the area, with the paths, the flower beds, trees, and structures symmetrically laid out relative to it. This design practice is known as axial symmetry, often employed at a large scale in Gardenesque-style Victorian gardens.

The fountain, painted a deep forest green, with gold accents, is designed in classical style and features the Roman water nymph Egeria at its pinnacle. Egeria stands amongst bullrushes, pouring water from an urn, the water in mythology having special properties associated with creation – appropriately Egeria is a protector of pregnant women. Lower on the fountain, Egeria is encircled by four water babies astride sea serpents. The classical design and references of the fountain were popular in the High Victorian era and reflect the influence of Italian garden design on Victorian Gardenesque gardening.

The fountain was created by the eminent New York ornamental ironwork manufacturer J. W. Fiske and Company. It is largely cast iron, a popular material at the time, with detail elements cast of various other metals including wood. All the materials used in the fountain's construction were then coated in lustrous, glossy paint, both to accentuate its beauty as well as to protect it from weathering and oxidation.

The Victoria Jubilee Fountain was installed in 1897, commissioned in recognition of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, marking 60 years of her rule. The fountain was unveiled by the

Countess of Aberdeen, Catherine Hamilton-Gordon, the wife of Canada's then Governor General, John Hamilton-Gordon, 7th Earl of Aberdeen, in a grand ceremony before a large crowd. A photograph taken that day, showing a portion of that crowd, can be found in a display near the trellis to your left. Historic photographs such as these were erected by The Friends of the Public Gardens in 2017 as a legacy project to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Public Gardens. Canada's official gift to Queen Victoria was the establishment of the Victorian Order of Nurses, a national, non-profit health organization that still operates in Canada today.

The Victoria Jubilee Fountain underwent a major restoration in 2012, to mark the 60-year Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, Queen Victoria's great-great-granddaughter. The scaffolding was removed from the restored fountain just days before its official reopening. That same evening, thieves stole several decorative pieces including one of the golden lions' heads. After it was announced publicly that the pieces were made of cast iron, the thieves appeared to have a change of heart, and the stolen items were found in a cardboard box tossed over the fence the next evening. The pieces were quickly re-installed in time for the reopening.

The Friends of the Public Gardens, who partially funded the restoration, sponsored a poetry reading and a special evening light show, to celebrate the 2012 reopening. You can hear more about this on our Royal Connections audio tour.

From this stop, retrace your path, moving now counterclockwise around the fountain for 5 metres until you reach a path on the right-hand side. Take this path, going under the iron trellis, and a couple of metres beyond it. Stop here. In front of you will be a large tree with heart-shaped leaves; a Katsura tree.

Katsura Trees

Though there are several Katsura trees located around the Gardens, this Katsura tree is one of a pair that are the most prominent. The other is located to your right, across the scroll bed and positioned as a mirror image, another example of symmetry around the fountain.

Native to Japan and China, the katsura tree features heart-shaped leaves that are burgundy in the spring, blue green in the summer, and a spectacular apricot colour in the fall - when they give off a scent akin to caramel or cotton candy. A smaller, weeping Katsura tree can also be found in the Jubilee Area, closer to the gate.

Facing toward this Katsura tree, with the fountain at your back, take the pathway to the right for 10 metres. Keep right at the next intersection and continue 10 metres until you reach a small triangular patch of grass in the pathway. This was where a regal golden elm was formerly planted.

The beloved golden elm that stood here, whose wide canopy provided a beautiful backdrop to the Victoria Jubilee Fountain, was badly damaged by Hurricane Dorian in 2019. The enormous force of the wind split its trunk, and although efforts were made to save it over the following two years, the tree eventually succumbed to the damage, and it had to be removed - to the dismay of many.

The path here splits around the triangular patch of grass. Take the left fork for 10 metres. When you reach the first intersection, keep left for another 10 metres until you reach another fork in the path. Take the right fork for 12 metres until you intersect with a wide promenade known as the Grande Allée. You'll know you are in the correct place when you find a decorative lamppost to your left, with the wide central pathway stretching right and left, from one side of the Gardens to the other. Please pause the audio until you reach this spot.

The bench on your left was donated by the Monarchists League of Canada to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. A ceremony to officially dedicate the bench had been scheduled for some time for September 10th, 2022. However, Her Majesty sadly died two days before, on September 8th. After some consideration, the event went ahead as scheduled, with the crown's representative in Nova Scotia, Lieutenant Governor the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc in attendance. The event served as an opportunity for people to pay their respects to our highly regarded monarch. At the same ceremony, the sod was turned for the purple fountain beech tree near the entrance gate that you saw earlier, donated by the Friends of the Public Gardens as part of the "The Queen's Green Canopy" initiative.

Prior to leaving this stop, glance down the Grande Allée to your right, towards Summer Street. You will see that many of the trees along this part of the Grande Allée are smaller than the massive trees lining the promenade in the other direction. Many of the massive trees, mostly American elms, that had lined the promenade in this area since the 1870's, were uprooted during Hurricane Juan in 2003. The uprooted trees were replaced with these Princeton elms, which are fast growing and resistant to Dutch elm disease.

From here, face away from Summer Street, and head down the Grande Allée promenade for 50 metres. You will pass another decorative lamppost on your right about midway to your destination, finishing where two paths branch off to the left and another decorative lamppost stands just beyond them. The bandstand will be at about 2 o'clock from your position here.

Here, to your left, about 3 metres off the Grande Allée is a stately London plane tree, rumoured to be one of Queen Elizabeth's favourite tree species. There is a small identification label at its base. Please pause the audio until you've found the tree.

London Plane Tree - *Platanus x Acerfolia*

The London Plane Tree came into existence by chance, being a hybrid of the Oriental Plane tree and the American sycamore, which are normally found in entirely different parts of the world. It's likely that the two species were brought into proximity in Britain sometime in the 17th century by botanical collectors, resulting in cross-pollination.

Remarkably tolerant of polluted urban environments and requiring minimal space for its roots, the tree was initially planted along London streets during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. It's an ideal city tree, and one of the most efficient at removing pollution particles from the air. Like sycamores, the London plane tree has bark that falls away periodically to reveal inner green and cream bark, creating its unique "camouflage" pattern.

This tree was damaged by vandalism during the summer of 2022. Vandals used a hatchet to remove bark potentially cutting off the flow of nutrients from the roots to the rest of the plant, a process called girdling, intended to kill a tree. Fortunately, this London plane is likely to survive, as the bark was not entirely removed around the trunk. Over 30 trees were damaged by vandals that night, some harmed worse than others, most but not all located in the area around Griffin's Pond. You will see more trees with damage covered by burlap nearby. Several trees have had to be removed but we're hopeful that most will recover from this senseless act.

Now, take the shoreline path to the right of the London plane tree, and follow the edge of Griffin's Pond, with the pond on your right, for 35 metres, until you reach a photographic display on your right.

This photograph, taken around 1870, depicts a famous local athlete, George Brown of Herring Cove, posing in his racing shell on Griffin's Pond. A world champion sculler, he was inducted into both Nova Scotia's and Canada's Sports Halls of Fame. In 1875 while training to defend his world crown in single sculls at the five-mile distance, he tragically suffered a stroke. He died at the age of 36.

Now, proceed for a further 25 metres in the same direction, until a path branches off to the left, away from the pond. Stop here. Please pause the audio until you reach the intersection.

Griffin's Pond

Griffin's Pond was created by diverting water to this location from the substantial Freshwater Brook that used to flow from the north end of the Halifax Common, through what is now the Halifax Public Gardens, and down to the harbour. Originally squarish in shape, revealing its human-made origins as a water storage reservoir for the British Military, its shorelines were sculpted into more natural shapes by the first superintendent of the combined Halifax Public Gardens, Richard Power.

Though a picturesque site nowadays, “Griffin’s Pond” has a grim history. In 1822, a young man named Lawrence Griffin was tried for murder of a local police officer. Despite evidence from several witnesses that pointed to his innocence, Griffin was found guilty. He was hanged in the execution grounds just east of the pond, in a gruesome public spectacle watched by hundreds, as was the custom of that time. The pond has been known as Griffin’s Pond ever since.

The Pond attracts many summer resident birds and serves as rest stop for migrating birds. Various species of waterfowl abound, including mallards, American Black Ducks, Great Blue Herons, ospreys, and on rare occasions, even the Common Loon. Other avian visitors to Griffin’s Pond include goldfinches, kingfishers and nuthatches. The pond also hosts four-legged denizens, with several turtles being spotted each summer by lucky visitors. In times past, the pond was home to majestic swans, beginning with a gift of a pair from King George V in 1926, and in its very early days - a couple of Newfoundland seals.

During the summer, a model ship can often be found anchored in the pond, following a Victorian tradition. The ship is typically a replica of the Titanic, however other models have graced the pond, including the liner Queen Mary, the schooner Bluenose and the Second World War era corvette HMCS Sackville.

Continue along the path following shoreline of Griffin’s Pond, for a further 30 metres towards a small quaint building with a pond-side, porch lookout, nestled in the corner of the pond. This is the Gardens’ duck house – stop when you have a good view of it.

The Duck House

Found in the northwest corner of Griffin’s Pond, the “duck house” was constructed in 1908, its design a whimsical interpretation of regional domestic architecture at the time. Its original purpose was to provide winter shelter for the domesticated birds of the Gardens.

Griffin’s pond was originally fed by Freshwater Brook, as mentioned earlier, until the 1990’s when the construction of the nearby Halifax Infirmary diverted the flow of the Brook elsewhere. With water no longer flowing into the pond, a pump was installed in the duck house, the purpose of which was to keep the water in the pond circulating so it would not become stagnant. Thus, the duck house is now a pump house.

The Greenhouses

As you can imagine, the operation of a Victorian Gardenesque-style garden on this scale requires supporting greenhouses. The five greenhouses that support the Halifax Public Gardens are located across Sackville Street from the Gardens. From our current location, looking beyond and to the right of the duck house, you can glimpse through the perimeter fence the

white flanks of some of those greenhouses. You can get a better view if you head up Sackville Street after the tour but be advised that the greenhouses are not open to the public.

A Victorian-era invention, greenhouse technology was developed after advances were made in glass making and metal manufacturing. This 'new' technology, and the increased protection and enhanced growing conditions on a grander scale that it offered, expanded the variety of plants that could be displayed in Victorian gardens and spurred development of new gardening techniques and display styles. Highly prized exotic plant species could be stored over winter in greenhouses and showcased in outdoor gardens during warmer weather. Today, in the desert plant bed near the bridge in the eastern part of the Garden, the large American agaves are planted in concealed wooden boxes that permit them to be brought inside the greenhouses during the cold months.

Greenhouses are also used to grow large numbers of annual flowers in preparation for the upcoming flower display season in the Gardens. In a process known as "bedding-out" when warmer outdoor weather arrives, plants in full bloom are moved en-masse into the Gardens to be arranged quickly into lush, ornate flower beds, far earlier in the year than would be possible without greenhouses. This also permits the gardeners to ensure that something is always in bloom in the Gardens; for example, the profusion of tulips planted in the beds around the Bandstand in Spring, replaced by other plant displays later in the season. Carpet beds, which depict a message, image or both, are created using dwarf plants grown with care in the greenhouses each year.

As an aside, another important Victorian invention that advanced gardenesque style design was the lawn mower. Although essential for the meticulous upkeep of sweeping expanses of lawn, lawn mowers had an even greater impact because of their ability to trim around geometric and sinuous shapes allowing Victorian gardeners more leeway to create elaborate decorative displays.

From here, continue along the shoreline path for 25 metres, passing the duck house on your right, until you reach the perimeter path that runs alongside Sackville Street. Turn left here, and you'll have the entrance gate where you started the tour ahead of you, at the end of the long, straight path. Head towards the gate, with Sackville Street now on your right, and continue for 70 metres until you find a copper beech tree on your left. It has a plaque at its base.

As you walk, note the large trees and the iron fence that separate you from Sackville Street. A feature of Gardenesque design is the separation of the garden from its busy surroundings, intended to create a refuge. One of the unifying measures taken by the first superintendent of the newly combined Halifax Public Gardens, beginning in 1874, was to plant saplings, mostly American elms and linden trees, around the entire perimeter of the Gardens to create a defining horticultural border. A rustic wooden fence was also erected at the time, but it was replaced with this ornate iron fencing in 1907. Many of the trees along the perimeter date back to the

original border planting, well over a century ago. Pause the audio until you have reached the copper beech tree.

The copper beech tree has distinct purple leaves and smooth grey bark. The leaves can remain on the tree during winter, making it stand out from its neighbours during that time of year. This particular copper beech, as you can see by the sign, was planted by the Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland, to commemorate its 75th anniversary in May 2000. The Royal Order of Scotland is part of the Order of Freemasonry and has existed since at least the early 1700s.

Scots and Scottish heritage are prominent in Nova Scotia, with large numbers of Scots immigrating to Nova Scotia during the Highland Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries, and as Loyalists following the American Revolution. This prominence is reflected in the provincial flag of Nova Scotia, which includes both the blue saltire - the diagonal cross, which is the national flag of Scotland - as well as the Scottish royal arms.

This is the last stop on our tour. From here you can continue along the perimeter path to the gate where you started the tour, 45 metres ahead of you at Summer and Sackville Streets, or you may wish to explore other parts of the Gardens.

We thank you for taking this audio tour of the Victoria Jubilee Fountain Area. This is the third of a three-part series that focuses on the horticulture, landscape design and history of different parts of the Gardens. We hope you've enjoyed learning about this section of the historic Halifax Public Gardens.