

La Fontaine Park

The activities presented in this circuit, along with the Montréal Urban BioKit, allow you to explore biodiversity in LaFontaine Park. The locations of sites of interest are identified by a short description, a symbol on the map, and GPS coordinates. Complementary information is hidden in a Geocache, which is a small container concealed near the GPS coordinates indicated. See what wonderful treasures you can uncover!

Voracious squirrels



Photo: Ville de Montréal

Red Squirrel

GPS: N 45° 31.569' W 73° 34.127'

**Near the Centre culturel
Calixa-Lavallée across from
the pétanque courts**



Although they delight tourists, squirrels don't make life easy for the park's trees. In spring, they tear off pieces of bark to drink the sugary sap and they build nests with the chips. Some branches attacked by squirrels then die of their wounds. You can recognize this by observing some trees in the vicinity of the tennis court and the nearby school. Feeding

the squirrels keeps their population abnormally high and aggravates the damage caused to the trees. That's why you must leave them alone to find the food they need!



Photo: Ville de Montréal

HISTORY OF THE PARK



GPS: N 45° 31.573' W 73° 34.215'

**Between the bridge and
the Centre culturel
Calixa-Lavallée**

The site of La Fontaine Park used to be occupied by a farm and a military training camp. In 1874, the Ville de Montréal leased part of the farm to create a public park. In 1901, it was named after Sir Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine, the first Prime Minister of the United Province of Canada.

The boarded-up lodge in front of you served as the entrance to the Garden of Wonders, a zoo that was operated between 1958 and 1989. Generations of visitors could observe an abundance of both farm animals as well as more exotic ones and become familiar with biodiversity in the heart of the city!

Between 1890 and 1952, thanks to its magnificent greenhouses, La Fontaine Park produced all the plants used by the Ville de Montréal to beautify its territory.

To discover where these greenhouses were located, go to the following coordinates:
GPS: N 45° 34.614' W 73° 39.724'.



Citizen Science:

Stand still for one minute and count the number of squirrels you see.
Did you notice anyone feeding the animals?

Send us your observations:
observationscitoyennes@ville.montreal.qc.ca

AN OLD SOUL IN THE PARK



GPS: N 45° 31.542' W 73° 34.401'

Near the statue of Dollard des Ormeaux

The ginkgo biloba is what is known as a living fossil. The first traces of this Asian tree date back over 200 million years. The ginkgo biloba is exceptionally hardy and can live as long as 1000 years, despite pollution and harsh urban conditions. Its fan-shaped leaves make it easy to recognize. In fall, they turn a dazzling yellow!

The ginkgo biloba has male plants and female plants. The vast majority planted by cities are male. Why? The seeds produced by the female plants are both toxic and foul-smelling, releasing an odour like rancid butter in the fall!



Photo: Jardin botanique de Montréal



Photo: Jardin botanique de Montréal

Ginkgo biloba seeds



Ginkgo biloba

Photo: Lise Servant, Jardin botanique de Montréal



Misplaced exoticism



GPS: N 45° 31.536' W 73° 34.215'

On the bridge between the two basins

Unfortunately, many aquatic pet owners in the neighbourhood abandon their little critters in the La Fontaine Park basin when they want to get rid of them. Releasing an animal into an ecosystem to which it does not naturally belong harms biodiversity. For example, the goldfish that are too often released in the basin attract predators that aren't normally observed in the middle of a city.

Resources:

- Ville de Montréal network of large parks
ville.montreal.qc.ca/grandsparcs
- Biosphère
ec.gc.ca/biosphere
- BioKits
ec.gc.ca/biotrousses-biokits