

RE-THINK ATHENS ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION INFORMATION MATERIAL

The most important tree varieties to be found in the area of intervention

Panepistimiou Street and the other main streets in the area of intervention, such as Amalias Avenue and Patisision Street, as well as a number of perpendicular roads, are lined with rows of trees. Most of those trees were planted by the Municipality of Athens during the last decades of the 20th century and stand as testimony to their sustainability in the harsh urban environment of Athens. The following list of trees to be found today in the area is not intended to place any limitation upon the competition entries and it is merely provided for your information.

1. ***Platanus acerifolia***. Sycamore trees have been recorded to exist in Athens since antiquity. In one of the rare references of Socrates to nature, the trees cited are sycamores. However, in contemporary Athens, the variety to be found is not the common Mediterranean sycamore (*Platanus Orientalis*) but the hybrid variety *Acerifolia*, which grows fast, adapts well to ground and climate conditions and, most significantly, shows great resilience to urban pollution. Many of those sycamores are now found along Panepistimiou Street and so far display sufficient growth by relation to their age. It is estimated that the intervention in Panepistimiou will further improve environmental conditions and will accelerate their growth.



2. ***Robinia Pseudoacacia***. Acacias are a common occurrence in Athens but the most common variety of acacia to be found in the center of Athens is *Robinia Pseudoacacia*. It arrived in Greece by the mid-19th century and prevailed in many tree rows because of its adaptability to a number of different ground soils, its resilience to draught and its rapid growth in urban environments.



3. ***Cercis Siliquastrum***. Cercis, commonly known as the redbud, can be located on Amalias Avenue, Patission Street and Dikaiosynis Square. The variety is native to the Eastern Mediterranean and has expanded all over continental Greece and the islands. It grows well in areas with a lot of sunshine and on relatively dry soil, either as individual trees or in rows.



4. ***Koelreuteria Paniculata***. The variety under the common name Goldrain tree is both resilient to draught and air pollution as well as to frost, and reaches the height of 10m. It can be located on Patision Street, Dikaiosynis Square and elsewhere.



5. ***Citrus Aurantium***. The sour orange tree is one of the best known and most endeared trees to be found in the narrow streets of Athens; it is often encountered in the center, on the perpendicular streets along Panepistimiou and in the gardens of the Trilogy. It is a very resilient variety, even in the polluted urban environment.



6. ***Morus Alba***. The white mulberry is ubiquitous in the streets of Athens. In the area of intervention, it is most often encountered on Sina Street, at its intersection with Panepistimiou, and at different locations. It grows fast in sunny areas with relatively dry soil and provides a lot of shade in the summer.



7. ***Populus Nigra***. The black poplar grows fast in the center of Athens due to the number of water currents running underground. The poplars planted in the middle of narrow perpendicular streets in the area of intervention, when the latter were pedestrianised during the 1980ies, are now comparable in size to the adjacent 6 and 7-storey buildings.



8. ***Phoenix Canariensis***. The Canary palms were brought to Greece in the 19th century and were associated to neoclassicism. A number of palm trees from that era still survive in Athens today, but most were probably planted the last 15 years, culminating in the time around the 2004 Olympic Games. The red beetle, presumably brought together with the latter, is responsible for their mass extinction from 2005 onwards. On Panepistimiou there are old palm trees at the Trilogy and newer ones in front of the Bank of Greece and on Dikaiosynis Square. Many palm trees were planted on Omonia Square a few years ago, but most are already cut because of disease. The tree has mostly decorative and symbolic purposes, but does not contribute to the improvement of environmental conditions with its shade but minimally.



9. ***Jacaranta Acutifolia***. The jacaranta, also known as the blue acacia, is a rapidly growing variety which bears abundant blue-purple blossoms; it can reach a height of 10m and naturally endures the climate and the soil of Athens. It is encountered in the center. An impressive row of jacarantas may be found on the main alley of Zappeion, beginning right across from Filellinon Street, on Amalias Avenue.

