



## Welcome to Taylor Memorial Arboretum.

**To help you enjoy your experience here we have put together this pamphlet describing an approximately one hour walking tour. The terrain is hilly and can be slippery so wear sturdy shoes and clothes appropriate for a hike in the woods.**

This guide starts at the map kiosk located at the head of the circle driveway. Before you start down the trail to your right, look up at the trees and slowly spin around. The large pines in the circle are Austrian Pines. The large trees behind the kiosk are Scarlet Oaks. There are large white ashes to the left of the oaks. The small tree in front of the building is a Paperbark Maple. Across the circle, that multi-branched pine with the camouflage bark is called the Chinese Lacebark Pine. Next, the large tree among the azaleas is a Weeping Japanese Cherry which is gorgeous when it blooms in April. Most of these trees were planted in the early 1950's when the Arboretum was first opened.

Now we are ready to start. Try to remember to stop and look up and around now and then. You will see something interesting.

As you go down the path, on your right is an azalea planting that extends over to the parking lot. The peak bloom period for azaleas is mid-April until mid-May, but there are specimens that bloom before and after this range. On your left, that feathery looking evergreen is a Chinese Plum Yew. This shrub is mostly resistant to deer feeding. Other plants that line this path include, but are not limited to, Viburnums, Fringe Trees, Sourwoods and Witch Hazels. The large tree on your left is an Irgi Tree and fairly rare around here. On your right, going down the slope, is a grove of Stagorn Sumacs. When they bloom, they are covered with honey bees. At the bottom of the path on your right, is a hillside from which we had to remove some diseased Scots Pines. We planted some Redbud seedlings we collected and hope to see them blooming in a few years.

Now stop for a moment and look out over the meadow before you. Now listen. Depending on the time of day and year, there may be bird visiting here and you could hear its call. This is the Native Meadow where we are encouraging the growth of existing native plants and planting others. We hope to be able to show visitors what various native plants are like when they mature so the homeowner can decide if the plant will work in their yards.

Walk either on the main trail or take the winding paths though the meadow. Walk slowly and pause. In the winter you will probably see white-throated sparrows, juncos, and robins ( if it is a warm winter). During migrations, many different species pass through including warblers, cedar waxwings and wood ducks.

From the far end of the meadow you can see Ridley Creek. Go down the slope with the handrail and check it out. The creek changes constantly so it is always a new view. For almost 300 years, there was a stone dam here about 7 ft. high. Originally the dam was built to power the Waterville Mills at the other end of this property. Around 1880 this mill went out of operation when it could not compete with steam-driven mills which could be built away from the creek and were not at risk of flooding out.

The dam remained in place and for many decades the pond upstream, known otherwise as an impoundment, was used for recreation such as small boating, fishing and ice skating. In recent years however, the impoundment was silted up. A collection of government agencies and environmental groups determined that this situation was detrimental to the ecological health of the stream and a safety hazard. In 2005 the dam was removed so the water could once again flow freely. The boulders ascending the stream bank were some of the capstones from the dam. See if you can find the one that rocks. Did you know you can move a ton?

To continue your tour, go back to the main trail and head downstream. You will be passing through a sample of a native flood plain forest. The large trees include Sycamores and Red Maples. Box Elders are the dominant mid canopy tree. Linderas are the main shrub. The ground cover is a mix of invasive plants. English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle are rampant. Still we are encouraging native plants. Populations of Giant Waterleaf, Trout Lilies and Virginia Knotweed are growing.

Shortly you will come to a fork in the path. Either way you go you will be under some large Southern Oaks. These were collected by the first director of the Arboretum. W.C. Camp was a renowned botanist in his time. He traveled to the Carolinas and brought back up to a thousand seedlings from the southern lowland forests. Willow Oaks, Swamp White Oaks, Laurel Oaks and Water Oaks plus more are represented.

When you leave the forest, you see a vernal pond with a floodplain meadow beyond it. A vernal pond is a seasonal body of water, holding water in wet times and drying out in between. Presently we are managing the pond to provide a breeding habitat for wood frogs, toads and peepers. We pump water as needed from the creek into the pond to ensure that the amphibians have time to successfully reproduce before the pond dries out. The large trees around the pond are Bald Cypresses. We also add water to the pond during droughts to keep these water loving trees happy. The woody protrusions from the ground are growths from the cypress roots. Called knees, it is thought that their function is to store water and increase the stability of the trees.

The next area is the Floodplain Meadow. Ridley Creek generally floods about every other year although the rate has varied over time. While it is natural for a creek to flow into the floodplain, when it does, the flooding certainly changes things. The highest the water has been in the last ten years is the bases of the specimen trees lining the left side of the meadow.

Walk the path alongside these trees. Look at each tree and when you get to the one that looks like a strong person flexing their muscles, you are at the Musclewood Tree. It is a type of Hornbeam from Eurasia. The large tree to its left is a Sawtooth Oak. This tree is one of the largest of its type in the state.

Both these plants were donations from The National Arboretum in Washington in 1955. Almost every visiting group takes pictures by the Musclewood. At the end of the procession of trees, the path splits. We will go to the right. When you get close to the creek and see a rough sandy trail, take it to the creek. We call this Pebble Beach because of all the river stones that collect here. This is the lowest point of land along the creek so it is where the water overflows the banks first. When the water spreads out, it loses some power and the stones drop out of the flow. This is a good spot to look for artifacts. It is also a keen spot to skim stones atop the water.

Go back to the path and follow it downstream. After about 50 yards, take the grassy path on your left. You should see some small evergreens ahead of you. These are Coastal Redwoods from California, the tallest species of tree in the world. Our trees have had a difficult time getting established, but we are still hopeful that some may become magnificent specimens. Behind the Redwoods are some 100 foot Eastern White Pines. Enter the path that goes under the last one. Take a moment and look at the trunks of the pines and let your gaze follow them up to the top. The view speaks for itself.

You could walk in the old mill race beneath the pines, but this tour will follow the small rise to where two paths cross. On your right should be a line of Norway Spruce trees and Magnolias are on the left. Enter the Magnolia grove. In the springtime with the appropriate weather, this is a beautiful spot. Continue into the Dogwood Area. Several new plants have been added in recent years. Friends and benefactors of the Arboretum have donated all of these. The largest tree in the collection is also the largest in Pennsylvania. Called The Giant Dogwood (*Cornus controversa*), it has been measured professionally and determined to be the largest of its type in the state. The Stiff-Needled Juniper (*Juniperus rigida*) to the left of the Giant Dogwood is also a State Champion.

Head down the slight slope and the Holly Collection is on your left. On the right there is what is left of the Crabapple display. The trees that died have been replaced with Fruiting Apples. In a few years, with some learning and work, we should be able to harvest fresh apples.

Follow the path as it passes above the Vernal Pond. On the right, a colonial era quarry site probably provided the stone used in the Dam and Structures on the property. It is amazing that people could complete such projects without the machines we have today.

You are in the last leg of this tour. This path ends with some Japanese Maples on your left. The White Dogwood in front of you is one of the nicest we have every seen. Look to your left and up. The tall deciduous conifer alongside the millrace is a Dawn Redwood. Thought extinct, plant explorers found surviving specimens in remote China during the 1930's. Taylor Arboretum received this individual from the Morris Arboretum in 1954.

Turn around and you are once again looking at the Native Meadow. Go between the meadow and the White Dogwood. Follow the uphill path to your right. This will take you back to the map kiosk and parking lot. We trust you enjoyed your walk and welcome you to return. There are many other special sights to see.