

Awbury Arboretum

COPE VISTA WALKING TOUR

A GUIDE TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF FIFTEEN TREES

Let's start our walk from the front porch of the Cope House. Directly ahead of you in the Copse is our first tree.

1. PAPER BIRCH (Canoe Birch, White Birch) *Betula papyrifera*

On the trunks of mature trees, the bark is white peeling into long narrow horizontal strips that are curled at the ends. From this bark Indians made their birchbark canoes. In early spring the catkins of birches look like tassels. Likes upland soils and cutover lands.

Step out on the grass, turn to your left and start walking down the slope.

2. SHAGBANK HICKORY *Carya ovata*

Mature trees have shaggy bark which curve outward at the ends. Young trees have smooth gray bark. Large leaves, with five (usually) leaflets. The edible nut is enclosed in a smooth husk with splits open into four parts. The word "hickory" is from an American Indian word for the "oily food removed from pounded kernels steeped in boiling water." The nickname "Old Hickory" was given to General Jackson because he was "tough as hickory."

Continue down the gentle slope, angling left.

3. TUPELO (Sour Gum, Black Gum) *Nyssa sylvatica*

A handsome ornamental and shade tree, with smooth, shiny, glossy green leaves which turn a brilliant red in the fall. The juicy dark blue fruit is eaten by birds and small mammals. Likes moist soils. Hard heavy wood was used for wheel hubs and wharf piles. Note the stiff horizontal twigs. Also, note the mature English Ivy *Hedera helix* covering most of the trunk. At this stage, the leaf changes shape and it blooms. It does not kill the tree.

Walk on down the slope to the beautiful large multi-trunked tree.

4. AMERICAN BASSWOOD (Linden) *Tilia americana*

95 feet. 120 years old. Shade tree. Spreads broadly when space permits. Distinctive heart-shaped leaf with uneven base. Fruits are small nutlets on a leafy wing which act as spinning parachutes. Fragrant flowers. Soft, light, fine-grained wood used for cabinets, toys, and yardsticks, is beloved by carvers.

Walk behind the Basswood tree. Look for a grace spreading slender multi-trunked tree.

5. EUROPEAN HORNBEAM *Carpinus betulus*

A small tree with distinctive muscular-appearing smooth dark gray bark. Tree has a deeply rippled and sinewy look. Birch-like leaves. Male catkins usually present in winter. In Europe, this very hard tough wood originally was used in yoking oxen and was known as Yoke-elm or Hornbeam. Prefers moist soil, low ground, and understory of hardwood forest.

Proceed out into the open, turn left and go up the slope to the highest point.

6. KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE *Gymnocladus dioica*

This odd tree has a wide range, but nowhere is it common. Leaflets out very late in spring. Leaves are large, twice-compounded, widely-spaced leaflets. Large heavy bean fruit in brown pods up to 10 inches long. Pioneers made a bitter drink from the seeds.

Take a few paces to your right to the largest tree. Do turn around and look at the several views of the landscape.

7. JAPANESE PAGODA TREE (Chinese Scholar Tree) *Seophora japonica*

Imported. Native of China and Korea. This street tree is unusual in having abundant late summer blossoms of yellowish-white petals in upright loose showy clusters 6 – 12 inches long, and pods like a string of beads. Hardy under city conditions but slow-growing. In the Orient, where it is grown around temples, a yellow dye is extracted from the flower buds.

Continue down the slope past trees and shrubs on your left, paralleling Avonhoe Road. Look for a row of oak trees close to the road.

8. SCARLET OAK *Quercus coccinea*

A medium-sized tree of the Red Oak group which is characterized by deeply-lobed leaves with bristle tips, and acorns that take two years to mature. Leaves turn red or scarlet in the fall. Small oval acorns. Note fluted shape of the trunk.

Proceed down, leveling out to the dominant Katsura.

9. KATSURA TREE *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*

Imported. Native of Japan and China. Hardy ornamental tree with attractive heart-shaped leaves which are purplish and yellow in autumn. Very fragrant flowers. Fruit is small and banana-like in bunches. Often a multi-trunked beautiful shade tree.

10. WITCHHAZEL *Hamamelis virginiana*

Blooms in fall or winter. Some pairs or tight groups of stubby 4-part seed pods can usually be found at any time of the year. In late autumn, after the leaves drop and the old fruit pods “pop out” their seeds

for distances up to 20 feet, the flowers, with four narrow tallow petals appear. Extract of the bark has long been used as a medicine.

Walk across the driveway. Here are three different maples along the road :Black, Sugar, and Norway.

11. BLACK MAPLE *Acer nigrum*

Similar to Sugar Maple but with shallower 3-lobed leaves darker green and more hairy; edges tend to droop. Wings of paired fruit more widely separated. Both Black and Sugar Maple are tapped in early spring when the sap flows. About 30 gallons of watery sweet sap are boiled down to yield a gallon of golden brown syrup.

Continue up the road

12. HONEY LOCUST *Gleditsia triacanthos*

Branches, and often trunk, are armed with spines 2 to 3 inches long. Double-compounded leaves. The flat, reddish –brown seed pods grows about a foot long. The Honey Locust is widely planted outside its natural range, the southern mountains, westward. Wood used for fence rails.

Proceed up the road, looking to your left.

13. SWEETGUM *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Star-shaped leaves. Planted as shade trees because of brilliant fall coloring. Also an important lumber tree. Hanging dry fruit is a ball covered with tiny horns which enclose tiny winged seeds. In pioneer days, a gum was gotten by peeling the bark and scarping off the resin. This gum was used for medicine and chewing gum.

Facing up the road, look for the Ash grove on your right.

14. ASH *Fraxinus americana*

Large tree with straight trunk. All ashes have opposite compound leaves, catkin-like flowers, and winged seeds in drooping clusters. The tough fine-grained elastic wood makes fine baseball bats, tennis rackets, hockey sticks, oars, and playground equipment.

Take a few steps into the copse on the left side of the road.

15. EUROPEAN BEECH *Fagus sylvatica*

Smooth gray bark, even on large trunks. Long spindle-shaped buds extend at sharp angle from slender twigs. Triangular-shaped edible beechnuts are enclosed in spiny husks. A common and important European timber tree, it is planted here as an ornamental.

End of walk. We hope you have enjoyed getting to know some of our trees. Please visit again.