

Woodcrest Villa Nature Trail & Arboretum

<http://rhodyman.net/WCV>

September 2024 Newsletter

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Woodcrest Villa Arboretum is Dedicated To Those Recognized with Trees

Franklinia Tree In Bloom In Arboretum

A Living Legacy of History and Beauty



The Franklinia tree, *Franklinia alatamaha*, is a rare and remarkable species that holds a special place in both horticultural history and American heritage. This small, deciduous tree is known for its stunning, fragrant white flowers that bloom in late summer to early fall, often with a hint of pink at the base of the petals. The flowers, which resemble those of the camellia, are about 3 inches in diameter and have a delicate, sweet fragrance.

The tree's leaves are long, dark green, and glossy, turning a brilliant red, orange, or purple in the fall, making the Franklinia tree a standout in any landscape. It typically grows to a height of 10 to 20 feet with a spread of 6 to 15 feet, forming a rounded, vase-shaped crown. Its bark is smooth and grayish, adding winter interest to gardens.



There are 2 Franklinia Trees planted in the Arboretum. There are 2 reasons for this. First, they cost us less than the other trees in the arboretum since they are small. Second, they have a reputation of being hard to grow. Both of the ones in the Arboretum are doing well, even with the heat waves and drought. During the drought, Bruce Metzler made sure they were watered when needed. Only one is blooming now. The other one had a heavy bloom last year and is resting this year.

History

The Franklinia tree was first discovered by botanists John and William Bartram along the banks of the Altamaha River in Georgia in 1765. The Bartrams, who were father and son, named the tree in honor of their friend Benjamin Franklin, one of America's Founding Fathers and a fellow naturalist.

Despite its discovery in the wild, the Franklinia tree has not been seen in its natural habitat since

1803. It is believed to be extinct in the wild, with all existing Franklinia trees descended from those cultivated by the Bartrams in their Philadelphia garden. This makes the Franklinia tree not only a botanical curiosity but also a symbol of successful conservation through cultivation.



To see this Franklinia tree that is blooming, start at Lew's shed below the WCV bus garage. Take the gravel road leading to the lower rear corner of the bus garage. From there take the trail leading to the Arboretum and Nature Trail. When you see the picnic bench, that is the Arboretum. The tree just beyond the picnic bench is Connie McMullin's flowering cherry. Just beyond the cherry is the Franklinia tree that is blooming. It doesn't have a brass plaque since it is the "backup tree," in case the other one dies.

A Legacy Preserved

The Franklinia tree is more than just a beautiful tree; it is a living legacy that connects us to America's early natural history. Its story is a testament to the importance of botanical exploration and conservation. Every Franklinia tree

grown today is a direct descendant of the Bartrams' original plants, making it a unique and precious part of our natural heritage. The Franklinia tree stands as a symbol of resilience, beauty, and the enduring legacy of discovery and conservation.

Honor/Memory Trees

Honor/Memory Trees to be Planted in Fall

Since 2019, 26 trees have been planted in the Arboretum. One tree, a Black Gum, is in the Arboretum expansion area. Four more trees will be planted in the expansion area in the fall: a River Birch, a Yellowwood, a Tulip Poplar and an Okame Cherry. Requests are being accepted in September for additional trees for fall planting. The tree varieties available are:

Bald Cypress - *Taxodium distichum*

Hackberry - *Celtis occidentalis*

Honeylocust - *Gleditsia triacanthos 'Skyline'*

Kentucky Coffee Tree - *Gymnocladus dioicus*

Princeton Elm - *Ulmus americana*

For more information contact Steve Henning at 717-735-7116 or acer103@earthlink.net.

Thanks For Donations

Thanks to those who donated for the Trail Crew to buy supplies for the Nature Trail & Arboretum such as wood chips for the trail, service for the tractor and new projects.

Make donations out to:

Tandem Living

with the note:

WCV Nature Trail & Arboretum

Send all donations to:

David Suh, Treasurer

WCV Nature Trail & Arboretum

2001 Harrisburg Pike, PH 202

Lancaster, PA 17601

Editor: Steve Henning:
acer103@earthlink.net