

# Trees of Columbia

## Walking Tours of Treasured Trees



A Senior Thesis Project  
by Alexandra Golden



# Belser Arboretum

0.6 miles,  
20-30 minutes



1 Tulip Poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*

2 Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*

3 White Oak, *Quercus alba*

4 Bald Cypress, *Taxodium distichum*

5 Am. Beech, *Fagus grandifolia*

6 Loblolly Pine, *Pinus taeda*

7 Am. Chestnut, *Castanea dentata*

8 Longleaf Pine, *Pinus palustris*

# Belser Arboretum

0.6 miles,  
20-30 minutes

This tour takes you through the grounds of the Belser Arboretum, granted to the University of South Carolina in 1959. The Arboretum's main entrance is at 4080 Bloomwood Road, and public visitations are held on the 3rd Sunday of every month. The Belser Arboretum contains five Treasured Trees, several of which are included along the path outlined here.

 **Tulip Poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera***  **Am. Beech, *Fagus grandifolia***

This beautiful Treasured Tree is right beside the picnic shelter. Tulip poplars are so named for their showy green and orange blossoms, which resemble tulips. However, they aren't really poplars! They are in the magnolia family.


Continuing along the main trail, you will see young beech trees as you go down the hill. Beech trees are most distinctive in winter, because the dead, copper-colored leaves stay on until spring.

 **Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis***

Just a few meters south of the shelter, you can find several lovely examples of sycamore trees. Their mottled bark, gray-green at the base and white towards the upper branches, is as distinctive as their broad leaves and hollow petiole bases.

 **Loblolly Pine, *Pinus taeda***

This massive Treasured Tree can be found shortly after crossing the bridge. Loblolly pines are the second-most common tree in the United States. The National Champion loblolly is found in Congaree National Park.

 **White Oak, *Quercus alba***

Pausing at Eagle Scout Bend, you can see a large two-trunked white oak off the left side of the path. White oaks have classic lobed leaves, and the bark has a shaggy or flaky appearance on older trees. Bourbon whiskey is aged in barrels made from white oak.

 **Am. Chestnut, *Castanea dentata***

Just past the loblolly, you can see hybrid American chestnuts planted as a restoration project. American chestnuts used to be one of the most common canopy trees in the United States but were destroyed by a fungal blight.

 **Bald Cypress, *Taxodium distichum***

Going to the end of the swamp overlook and looking left (west), you can see many bald cypress trees. Their distinctive knees are poking up from the wet soil. The "bald" in bald cypress is because they are deciduous, unlike most conifers!

 **Longleaf Pine, *Pinus palustris***

Where the main loop forks, you will see a pine forest. In the middle is a stand of longleaf pine. Look for tufts of pine needles growing from the ground--these are longleaf pines in their fire-resistant grass stage.

Trees of Columbia Walking Tours

# Columbia Riverfront Park



# Columbia Riverfront Park

1.5 miles, 35-45 minutes

This tour takes you along the historic Columbia riverfront. The canal was used to power the first electric textile mill as well as the oldest hydroelectric plant in the state. The mill has closed, but the hydroelectric plant is still in operation. An amphitheater provides a venue for local events year-round. Parking is available by the main entrance on Laurel Street.

## 1 Water Oak

Before you reach the restrooms and just after the picnic overlook, you'll see a water oak growing on top of a hill. Water oaks are found in all of South Carolina's habitats, and their acorns are an important winter food source for many animal species, including deer and ducks.

## 2 Crepe Myrtle

After you cross the wooden footbridge over the canal, you will see a row of crepe myrtles planted on the left side. Crepe myrtles are Asian, but they grow well in South Carolina and are a common street tree. Notice the abundant Spanish moss growing on many of these.

## 3 Sweetgum

When you reach the wooden overlook, take a moment to walk onto it. On the right side of the deck you can see two large sweetgum trees. These trees are easily recognizable by their five-pointed leaves and their hard, spiky fruits.

## 4 Loblolly Pine

Near the first utility tower overlook, you can see a windswept loblolly pine. Loblollies are one of the most important timber trees in the Southeast. The loblolly genome has been completely sequenced, and it is the largest of any organism yet sequenced, at 7 times the size of the human genome.

## 5 Shortleaf Pine

Just a few feet further down the path, you can see a large shortleaf pine. The pine has a split trunk and a windswept appearance. Shortleaf pine has a large range and frequently hybridizes with both loblolly and slash pines.

## 6 Black Cherry

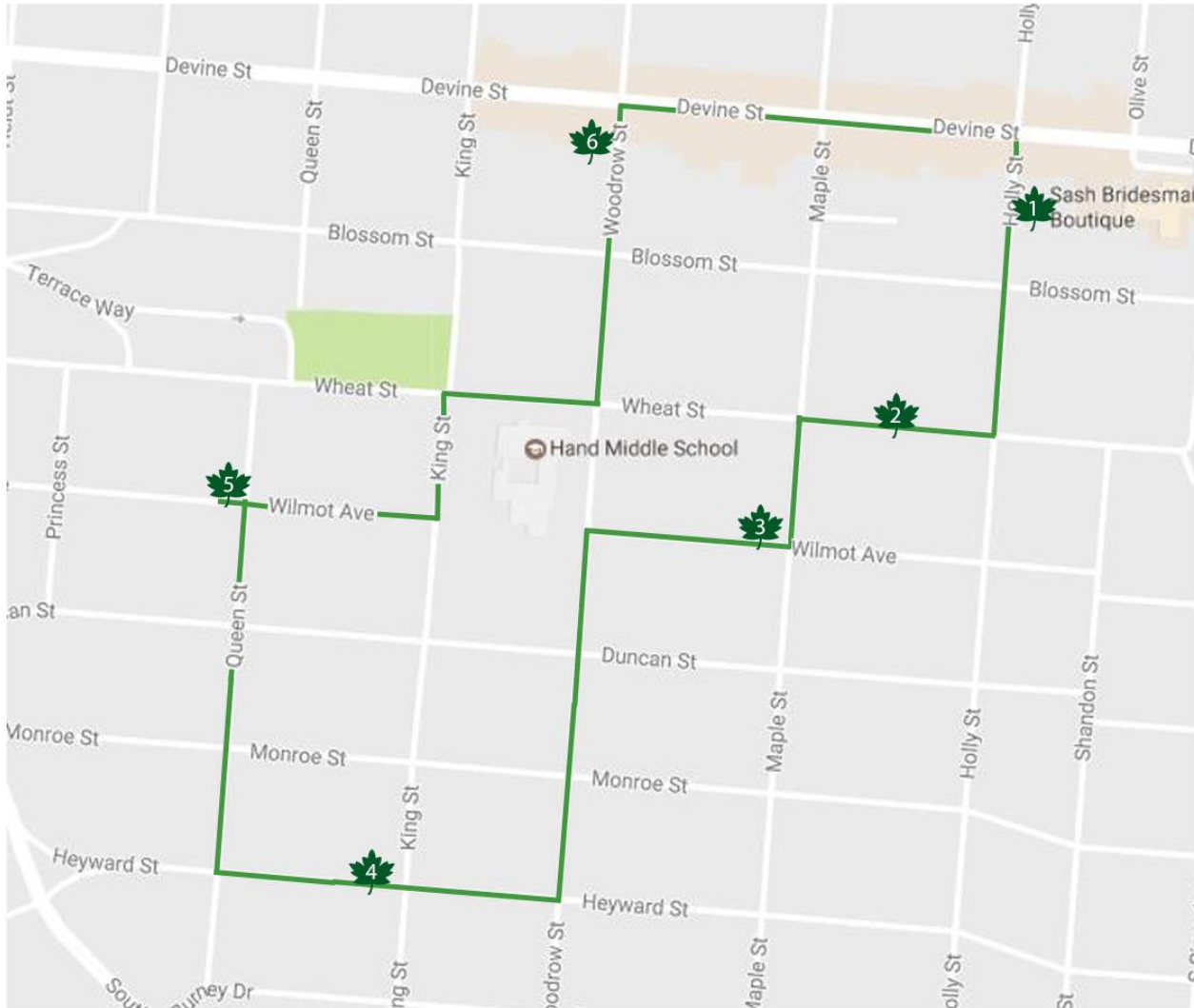
This native cherry is located next to the overlook by the railroad tracks. Black cherry contains cyanide in the leaves and branches, but the fruit can be used to make a tart jelly. Bark extract is often used in cough syrups.


## 7 Southern Magnolia


Just past the 3/4 mile marker, you can see a large Southern magnolia covered in Spanish moss. This tree may not be native to Columbia, but it has naturalized and is a symbol of the Southern garden.


# Shandon


2.0 miles, 45-60 minutes





 Sycamore  
*Platanus occidentalis*  
614 Holly St.

 Swamp Chestnut Oak  
*Quercus michauxii*  
2812 Wheat St.

 Deodar Cedar  
*Cedrus deodara*  
2728 Wilmot Ave.

 Saucer Magnolia  
*Magnolia x soulangiana*  
2630 Heyward St.

 Live Oak  
*Quercus virginiana*  
2436 Wilmot Ave.

 Flowering Cherry  
*Prunus* sp.  
608 Woodrow St.

# Shandon

2.0 miles, 45-60 minutes

This tour takes you on a journey through Shandon. Established in the 1890s, Shandon is a desirable neighborhood to live in, and residents reflect multiple generations of Columbia citizens. Parking for this tour is available in two-hour spots along the storefronts on Devine Street, and street parking is available in the neighborhood itself.

## **Sycamore, 614 Holly St.**

This multi-trunked sycamore, in front of Sash Bridesmaid Boutique, has the characteristic camouflaged green and gray bark peeling to white at the uppermost part of the tree. In the autumn you can see its fuzzy fruits, which look like orange cotton balls. These fruits give the tree another common name, buttonball tree. The next stop will be shortly after turning right onto Wheat.

## **Swamp Chestnut Oak, 2812 Wheat St.**

This large street tree is also known as basket oak because its inner bark is thin and flexible enough to be woven into baskets. The acorns are sweet and a favored forage for deer and other forest mammals. Notice the Little Free Library on this specimen!

## **Deodar Cedar, 2728 Wilmot Ave.**

At the intersection of Wilmot Ave. and Maple St., you find a grand Deodar cedar. This Himalayan native is frequently planted around Columbia, and it is considered a divine tree in Hindu mythology. Look for female cones, which are tinged blue and often break into what look like wooden roses.

## **Saucer Magnolia, 2630 Heyward St.**

Saucer magnolias are a popular ornamental species and are a hybrid cross between two different magnolias. They are deciduous, and are particularly distinctive in late winter when the large pink flowers appear before the leaves have come out. Our next tour stop is on Wilmot Ave. Watch for traffic on Queen St. because there is not a sidewalk. The roads are wide, though, and will provide you with enough space.

## **Live Oak, 2436 Wilmot Ave.**

A beautiful live oak marks this stop on the tour. This Treasured Tree is a native of the coastal plain but is an enduring symbol of the Old South. The famous Angel Oak tree on Johns Island, outside Charleston, is a 400-year-old live oak tree. While walking to the next stop on the tour, take a moment to enjoy the dogwood trees planted abundantly along Wilmot.

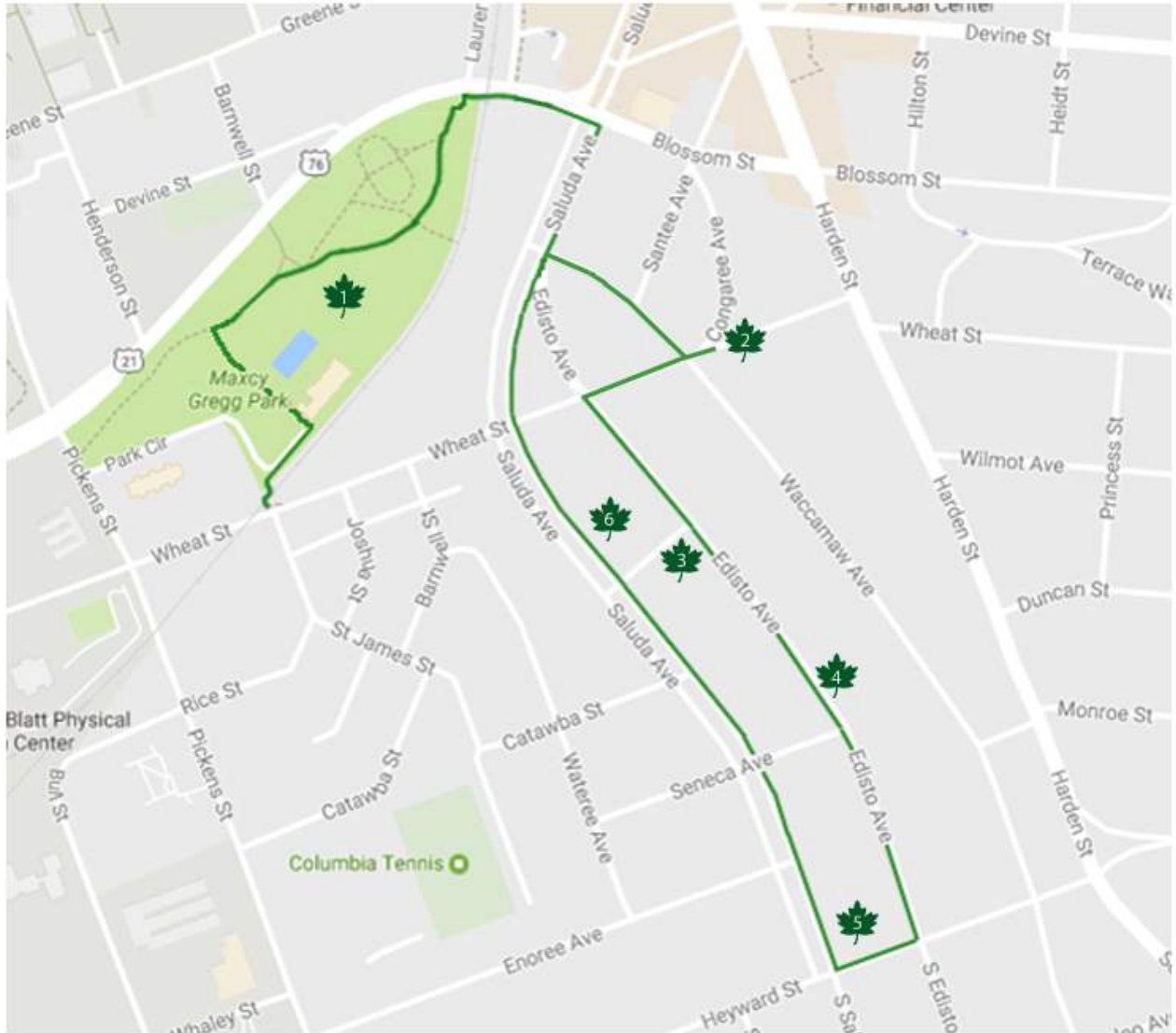
## **Flowering Cherry, 608 Woodrow St.**

At the intersection of Blossom St. and Woodrow St., you find a large cherry tree drooping over the sign for Shandon Presbyterian Church. Tracking cherry blossoms is a national pastime in Japan, and bloomwatch forecasts have been adopted by the National Park Service to track Yoshino cherries on the National Mall.



# Wales Garden

2.0 miles, 40-60 minutes



-  **1** Oak Grove  
*Quercus virginiana*  
Maxcy-Gregg Park
-  **2** Holly-leaf Tea Olive  
*Osmanthus* spp.  
Wheat St. & Congaree St.
-  **3** Dawn Redwood  
*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*  
327 Edisto Ave.

-  **4** Ginkgo Grove  
*Ginkgo biloba*  
210 Edisto Ave.
-  **5** Southern Magnolia  
*Magnolia grandiflora*  
100 Saluda Ave.
-  **6** Eastern Red Cedar  
*Juniperus virginiana*  
410 Saluda Ave.

# Wales Garden

This tour begins at the Maxcy-Gregg Park on Blossom Street. Parking is available at meters on Park Circle or in front of the Maxcy Gregg Pool. Wales Garden is the neighborhood from Pickens to Harden and from Blossom to Heyward.

Development of this area began in the early 1900s, and today Wales Garden is a popular residential neighborhood for jogging, biking, and tree observation.

## 1 Oak Grove

Entering Maxcy Gregg Park, you will immediately notice the beautiful old live oaks. Live oaks are a native of the Coastal Plain, usually found in maritime forests. They have a low crown and wide, spreading limbs. Enjoy the trees as you continue out of the park. Turn right onto Saluda, then left onto Waccamaw.

## 4 Ginkgo Grove

A block further up Edisto and along both sides of the street are numerous ginkgo trees. Ginkgos were thought to be extinct until modern populations were discovered in China, making this species a living fossil. Your next turn will be a right onto Heyward, then a right back onto Saluda.

## 2 Holly-leaf Tea Olive

At the intersection of Wheat and Congaree, near 511 Congaree Avenue, you will find a nonnative tea olive. This opposite-leaved evergreen has fragrant flowers and blooms in the fall, making it a lovely addition to Southern gardens. Backtrack along Wheat towards Waccamaw, then continue to Edisto and turn left.

## 5 Southern Magnolia

Along the median of Saluda Avenue, you will see magnificent magnolias. Their showy blossoms are a familiar summer sight. Native to the coastal plain, magnolias are common as an ornamental all throughout the South.

## 3 Redwood

On the right side of the road, you can see a beautiful young redwood tree. Redwoods are of course famous for being giant trees, but this individual is very young compared to its California cousins. This is a dawn redwood, a Chinese species which is endangered in its native habitat.

## 6 Eastern Red Cedar

A bit further down the street you will begin to see Eastern red cedar trees planted in the median. Red cedar is actually a kind of juniper, and the berries were once used as the flavor for gin. When you reach Five Points, turn left onto Blossom and continue back to the Maxcy-Gregg Park.



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