

# JOSEPH BRYAN PARK TREE TOUR

*Produced by:*  
**Friends of Bryan Park**



**Friends of Bryan Park**  
*Richmond, VA*

[www.friendsofbryanpark.org](http://www.friendsofbryanpark.org)

---

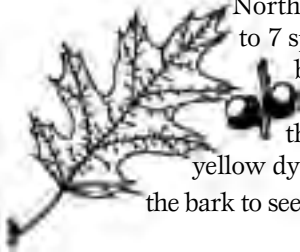
Researched and written by William Andrews & Friends of Bryan Park  
Designed by Christine Stoddard, Quail Bell Press & Productions

This walking tour visits more than two dozen trees within a short walking distance of **Shelter #1**. The map on the back of this booklet shows the location of each tree. At each tree you will find a plaque with the tree's scientific name (first genus, then species, in Latin), its common name and a Quick Read code which enables a participant to obtain additional information.

The Tree Tour begins just south of **Shelter #1**, across the street near the large, roofed bulletin board where you will find a large cluster of black oaks. These first three trees are deciduous, which means they drop their leaves in the fall. Conversely, most evergreens keep their leaves throughout the year.

---

- 1. Black Oak** (*Quercus velutina*) - A common Oak, native to eastern North America. Its leaves are a shiny green and have 5 to 7 spiny lobes. Acorns are small and have deep, bowl-like scaly tops. The inner bark is a bright yellow or orange, which typically helps identify the tree. The pigment in the bark was used as a yellow dye in the last century. Please DO NOT slash into the bark to see the yellow-orange wood!



---

*There is a large poplar near the restrooms, just beyond the black oaks.*

- 2. Tulip Poplar** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) - Also called a Yellow Poplar or Tulip Tree, it is native to North America and related to Magnolias. It is the largest eastern hardwood, reaching heights of up to 160 feet. It tends to grow with a straight, vertical trunk and a high crown of branches. The leaves are simple 4-lobed stars, about 6 inches in length. In April, it develops a small tulip-like flower, with pale yellow and green petals, with orange at the base. Do they remind you of magnolia flowers, a little?



---

*Walk closer to the tennis courts from the Tulip Poplar to find the Sweetgum. Look for the spiky Sweetgum balls on the ground.*

- 3. American Sweetgum** (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) - Another common deciduous tree in the eastern US, recognizable for its five-pointed star-shaped leaves, similar to maples. It grows between 65 and 75 feet tall, and also has a straight, vertical trunk and a high crown. Its fruit is the round, spiky gumball. Its lumber, somewhat hard, is used for furniture, veneer and interior trim, small carvings and toys. The leaves are pleasantly fragrant when crushed.



---

*Walk to the closest corner of the tennis court and look to your immediate right to find the Virginia Pine.*

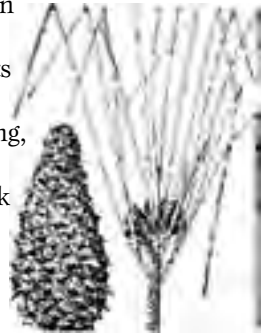
**4. Virginia Pine** (*Pinus virginiana*) - A medium-sized evergreen, 30 to 40 feet tall, with a ragged, flat-topped crown. It is native to Virginia. It likes poor soils in the east, and is also called the Scrub Pine. Its bark is reddish-brown and scaled. Its needles, in bundles of two, are 1 to 3 inches long and often twisted. Its cones, 1.5 to 2.5 inches long, have a prickle on each scale.



---

*Continue walking down the tennis courts, and look to the right to see loblolly pines. Please watch out for Poison Ivy.*

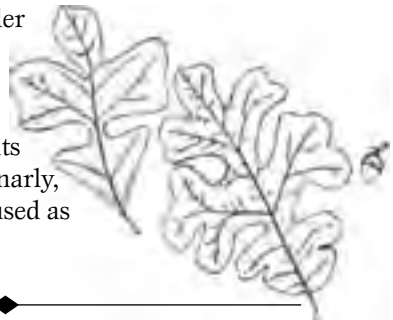
**5. Loblolly Pine** (*Pinus taeda*) - The most common evergreen in the southeastern US, and the most common pine in Bryan Park. These trees reach heights of 100 to 120 feet, with a roundish, open crown. Needles come in bundles of three, are 6 to 9 inches long, slender and stiff and yellow-green. The scaly oval to conical cones are initially green but mature into a dark brown cone, 4 to 6 inches long. Be sure not to mix these up with the Virginia Pines, which have denser cones and shorter needles.



---

*Walk to the end of the court. The large tree drooping over the court is the Post Oak.*

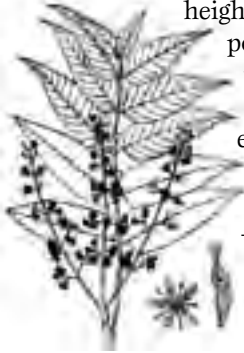
**6. Post Oak** (*Quercus stellata*)- A smaller oak, native to the eastern US, but less common than White Oaks. The leaves have a distinctive, smooth-lobed shape, and a leathery feel. It tends to reach heights of 40 and 50 feet, often with a crown of gnarly, twisted branches. Its wood is commonly used as fence posts.



---

*Leave the tennis courts and walk away from the beginning of the tour. Immediately behind the tennis courts is the Ailanthus tree.*

**7. Ailanthus** (*Ailanthus altissima*) - Also called the Tree of Heaven, this medium-sized deciduous tree is native to China and Taiwan. It reaches heights of about 50 feet, but lives only about 50 years. The pointed, oval leaflets attach to a central stalk to form 1 to 4 foot compound leaves. It has been used in China for silk production, but in the US it has spread extensively - it is a highly invasive species. Look at the forest border - it is covered in it!




---

◆ ◆ ◆

*Follow the border of the forest. Turn to your left. The Live Oak stands alone in the field.*

**8. Southern Live Oak** (*Quercus virginiana*) - An oak native to the southeastern US, common in coastal areas. It is called the “live” oak because it is evergreen (actually losing its leaves when new leaves sprout in the early spring). Live Oaks can vary in size, from small trees, stunted and shaped by strong sea winds, to a maximum of 85 feet tall, often spread widely, 2 or 3 times their height. They have numerous, thick lower limbs, giving them a unique close-to-the-ground appearance, and have small dark acorns. Its leaves are long and slender, without the side lobes as on most oaks. In the south, they are draped with Spanish Moss.

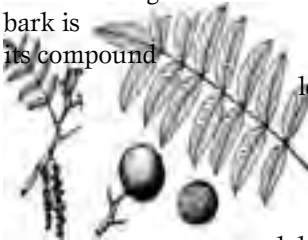



---

◆ ◆ ◆

*Continue walking south towards the soccer fields. You will find 2 black walnuts near the exercise bars.*

**9. Black Walnut** (*Juglans nigra*) - A native to Eastern North America, this flowering deciduous tree reaches heights between 50 and 90 feet. Its bark is brown to black and deeply furrowed; its compound leaves are long and alternate. The small compound flowers are in clusters, which become small nuts encased in thick green husks. These become dark brown when mature, and drop from the tree. The walnut meat inside is sweet and delicious. Early settlers would make a brown dye from the walnuts, and its dark wood is highly valued for furniture.



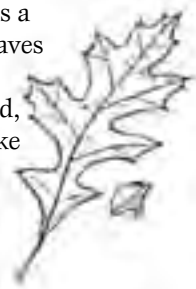
**10. Sugar Maple** (*Acer saccharum*) – A native to the eastern US, it is a fairly large tree, reaching heights of 80 to 120 feet. Its large leaves have pronged lobes which turn a bright scarlet in autumn. Its seeds, in pairs, have small wings - look for the familiar helicopter seeds on the ground. Its hard wood is used for furniture, flooring, and even skateboards. Further north, its sap is collected for maple syrup.



---

*Turn and walk towards the swings in the playground. Once at the swings turn left. The larger tree is the Pin Oak.*

**11. Pin Oak** (*Quercus palustris*)- Another native oak, it is a medium-sized tree, reaching heights of 50 to 80 feet. Its leaves are 5 to 7 lobed, sharply pointed teeth, with small acorns. Strangely, younger Pin Oaks retain their leaves year 'round, like evergreens. Upon maturation, they lose their leaves like deciduous trees. The Native Americans used the bark to make a drink to soothe intestinal pain.



---

*Turn and look across the playground. The huge tree beyond the playground is a Willow Oak.*

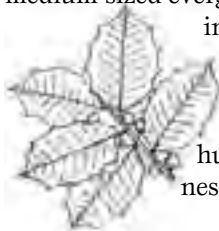
**12. Willow Oak** (*Quercus phellos*) - Another oak native, it can reach heights of 60 to 80 feet, and as it matures it attains a broad, rounded shape. Its leaves, long and slender rather than lobed, resemble those of willow tree. The trunk can be 3 to 4 feet in diameter, and the bark grey to black. Its small, round acorns have a scaly, saucer-like cup. The wood, like the black oak, is orange and is often used for pulp and paper. These trees are often planted as street trees.



---

*From the Willow Oak, turn left and walk towards the road. Look for the row of trees right by the road.*

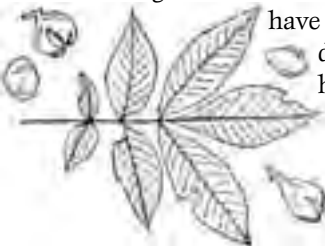
**13. American Holly** (*Ilex opaca*) - A tree native to the eastern US, this medium-sized evergreen has short branches and grows from 30 to 50 feet tall in a narrow, pyramidal form. The leaves are small with multiple spiny-toothed margins. The fruit, which often lasts into winter, are small. Numerous bright red berries, a delicacy among songbirds, are poisonous to humans. The tree forms a thick canopy, so birds like to nest within it.



---

*From the Hollies, walk three trees down towards shelter 1 to find the Pignut Hickory.*

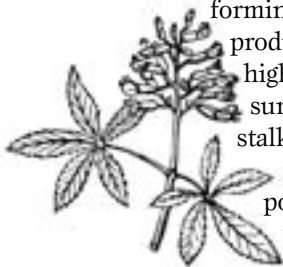
**14. Pignut Hickory** (*Carya galabra*) - Another native eastern US tree, it can reach heights of 100 feet. The long leaves, made up of 5 to 7 leaflets, have very distinct veins. Its bark forms a rough, diamond-like pattern. It grows pear-shaped hickory nuts, which animals love to eat. It is often preyed upon by insects.



---

*Walk back toward the parking area and locate the trees in the triangle between the roads. Note the tree on the left.*

**15. Red Buckeye** (*Aesculus pavia*) - This deciduous park specimen, native from North Carolina southward, can also be found as a clump-forming shrub. Growing 10 to 35 feet high, in spring it produces beautiful red spike-like flowers 6 to 10 inches high. Its leaves, which normally drop by the end of summer, consist of 5 leaflets fanning out on central stalks. Beware its seeds and young shoots. They are poisonous if eaten! American Indians crushed these poisonous parts. When they added them to water, fish would be stunned and easier to catch.



---

*Continue through the right set of yellow gates to the bottom of the hill. Look for the large White Oak on your right.*

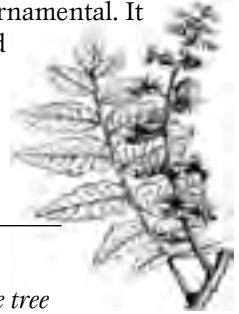
**16. White Oak** (*Quercus alba*) - The most common oak tree in Virginia, and plentiful in Bryan Park (many of them thought to be planted by work crews during the Depression). Height 65 to 85 feet; its leaves are 5 to 8 inches long, with 7 or 9 rounded lobes. Its seeds are acorns with non-bitter meat, eaten by the Native Americans and much-loved by wildlife. Its timber is very versatile, used for building, barrels, and firewood.



---

*Continue down the hill. The tree in the grass close to the dam is the Golden Rain Tree.*

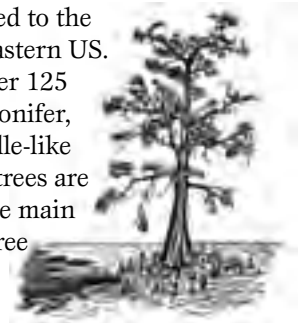
**17. Golden Rain Tree** (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) - A small deciduous tree native to Eastern China and Korea, and an interesting ornamental. It typically reaches heights of up to 50 feet. The compound leaves are comprised of 9 to 15 small, lobed leaflets. The clusters of small flowers are bright yellow, hence the 'golden rain' name.



---

*Walk down the road to the end of the spillway. Look for the tree plaque. The Bald Cypress is straight behind it, but several feet away.*

**18. Bald Cypress** (*Taxodium distichum*) - Related to the redwood family, this conifer is native to the southeastern US. This almost prehistoric tree can reach heights of over 125 feet and prefers swamplands. Even though it is a Conifer, meaning it grows cones, it is deciduous and its needle-like leaves turn red in the autumn, then drop. Cypress trees are famous for their cypress knees, which grow near the main trunk, rising out of the water. They may help the tree maintain its balance or breathe air.



---

*To the left of the Cypress, look for the Sycamore tree.*

**19. American Sycamore** (*Platanus occidentalis*) - Also called the American Plane Tree. A native eastern US deciduous tree, it is often found around waterbodies. It grows tall, reaching heights of between 100

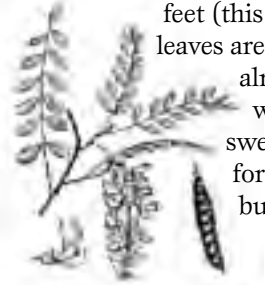


and 130 feet, and has a distinctive, smooth, gray-white bark. Its leaves are quite large, with 3 to 5 point ragged lobes. The Sycamore's unique seeds are clustered in one-inch spherical "button-balls" that hang on slender stems.

---

*Keep walking west along the road. You will see the Black Locust to your right, in front of a 'Do Not Mow' sign.*

**20. Black Locust** (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) - A deciduous tree native to southeastern United States. It is a medium-sized tree, reaching heights of 80 feet (this volunteer has multiple trunks). The compound



leaves are made up of small, oval shaped leaflets. The bark is almost black, and its twigs have sharp thorns. Its white flowers grow in drooping clusters and smell sweet! Its wood, highly resistant to rotting, was used for fence posts and now is being used in "green" building exterior construction and decking.

---

*Walk further west along the road. Look for the River Birch with its distinctive orange-red peeling bark. It is several feet from the road near the edge of the lake.*

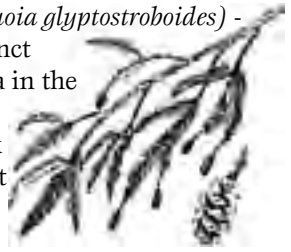
**21. River Birch** (*Betula nigra*) - A native to the eastern US, it is a medium-sized tree, typically reaching heights of 80 feet. Usually the trunk is



divided into several arching limbs and the reddish bark on young trees flakes off like paper. Its leaves are irregularly oval with coarse, double toothed margins. The seeds are often spread by flood waters, so Birches are commonly found beside streams and in floodplains.



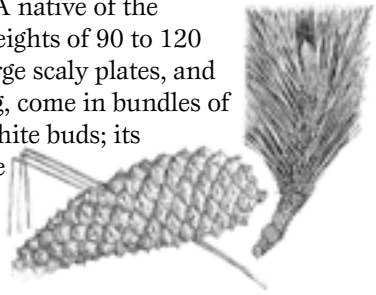
**22. Dawn Redwood or Metasequoia** (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) - relative of the Giant Sequoia was thought to be extinct until a small colony was discovered in remote China in the 1940s. This non-native can reach 100 feet, and is striking with its thick, vertical reddish-brown trunk and conical form. Its lacy leaves are small and bright green, growing opposite each other on small stems. They turn a foxy red in autumn, then drop. This 'living fossil' (66-99 million years old) also produces small cones.



---

*From the Dawn Redwood, look for the tall evergreen to the right, in the stone circle.*

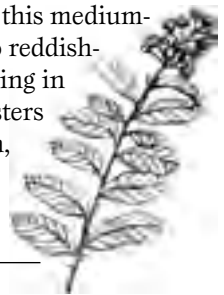
**23. Long-leaf Pine** (*Pinus palustris*) - A native of the southeastern US, this evergreen reaches heights of 90 to 120 feet. Its bark is dark orange-brown with large scaly plates, and its bright green needles, 8 to 18 inches long, come in bundles of three. This pine can be recognized by its white buds; its spiny cones are initially green, then mature into brown cones 6 to 10 inches long. Widely used for lumber, pulp, and resin.



---

*Look a little way uphill toward Shelter 1. You will see several multi-trunked trees.*

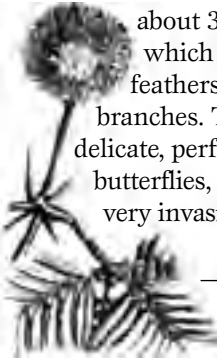
**24. Crape Myrtle** (*Lagerstroemia*) - A native of India, this medium-sized ornamental shrub often has multiple, smooth, tan to reddish-brown trunks. Its leaves are small, green, and oval. Blooming in the heat of summer, the Crape Myrtle is covered with clusters of crepe-like flowers, ranging in color from purple, fuchsia, magenta, red and white, and every shade in between.



---

*From the Crape Myrtles, go back to the road near the water and follow it south until you reach the intersection with the bridge. The Mimosa is right over the sign post.*

**25. Mimosa** (*Albizia julibrissin*) - This small, deciduous tree is native to Southern Asia and was brought to America as an ornamental. It grows only about 30 feet tall but spreads out quickly. It has subleaflets which grow symmetrically on central stalks (thus resembling feathers), which in turn grow symmetrically on longer stem-like branches. The flowers look like pink-white powder puffs, with a delicate, perfume-like scent, highly attractive to many species of bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Unfortunately, this plant is also very invasive.



---

Do not cross the bridge. Follow the road uphill until you are in line with the volleyball court end of Shelter 1.

**26. Black Cherry** (*Prunus serotina*) - A native of the eastern US, this deciduous tree can be grown as an ornamental (its small flowers are white, clustered on a stem 4 to 6 inches long) and for its fruit, flavorful cherries with black skins and dark-purple flesh. Trees can grow up to 100 feet tall, with reddish-brown bark, smooth when young, becoming scarred and warty as it ages, scaly when old. The wood is prized for cabinetry and furniture.



---

### Mystery Tree - Can You Identify Me?

I am a prehistoric evergreen with large, leathery oval leaves; glossy dark green on top and lighter green on the bottom. I can grow to 80 feet tall. My bark is brown-grey and scaly. My strongly fragrant white flowers are so large that my name is *grandiflora* (I evolved before bees appeared; my flowers developed to encourage pollination by beetles). My fruit is an oblong pod, light brown, soft and spongy - through its many slits you can see my bright red seeds. I am planted throughout the Park - what tree am I?

(Answer at the bottom of the map.)

---

In the late 1700s, this property was part of William Young's 558 acre farm. His home, Westbrook, stood where Westminster Canterbury is now, and his grist and lumber mills stood by the dam on lower Young's Pond. He had 2 children; John inherited 279 acres east of Hermitage Rd.; his daughter Rosina inherited 279 acres west of Hermitage Rd., most of which is now Bryan Park. She married neighbor Augustus Mordecai in 1835; he built a home called Rosewood in her honor, and they had 4 children. The homesite is probably between the Stone Camp House and the Playground.

During the Civil war, the Park's higher ground was part of Richmond's Outer Defense Line. Rosewood remained a working farm until Rosina's death in 1906.

In the 1880s, Joseph Bryan, lawyer, industrialist, developer and publisher of the Richmond Times newspaper, lived at nearby Laburnum with his wife, "Belle" Stewart Bryan, of Brook Hill. When her famous husband died in 1908, Belle and her sons purchased Rosewood farm and gave it to the City as a park, in memory of Joseph Bryan, in 1909.

A grateful City Council erected the memorial gates at the Park's entrance, which were moved and reconfigured by construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike. Each decade, the City has made successive waves of improvements, described in the *Illustrated History of Bryan Park*, written by the Friends of Bryan Park, which was founded in 1994 to protect and improve Joseph Bryan Park.

### **About the Writer:**

William Andrews, a member of the class of 2012 at Collegiate School, created this tour while an intern for Friends of Bryan Park during the Summer 2011. He enjoys math and science, and rowing on the River City Crew team.

### **About the Designer:**

Christine Stoddard is a VCUarts senior and a freelance writer/artist. One of Style Weekly's 2011 "Top 40 Under 40" honorees, Christine is also the director of Quail Bell Press & Productions ([www.quailbell.com](http://www.quailbell.com)) and the executive editor of *Quail Bell Magazine* ([www.quailbell-magazine.com](http://www.quailbell-magazine.com)).

© Entire written contents copyrighted 2012 by Friends of Bryan Park, Richmond, VA.  
Inside images by Florida's Educational Technology Clearinghouse, public domain.

*Revised and reprinted, 2014*

Thanks to John Zeugner, Sally Chamberlin, and Friends of Bryan Park; Luke McCall, Arborist, in the of Richmond Urban Forestry Division; the Richmond Parks and Recreation Department; and Garrett Tidey (cover illustrator).

### **Interested in Trees and Urban Forestry? Visit:**

[www.richmondgov.com/PublicWorks/UrbanForestry.aspx](http://www.richmondgov.com/PublicWorks/UrbanForestry.aspx)  
[www.richmondtreestewards.org](http://www.richmondtreestewards.org)

Friends of Bryan Park thank the Richmond Tree Stewards for designing and mounting our new tags, which have been updated with QR codes. Scan the code with a smart phone to learn much more about each tree.

### **Interested in Joseph Bryan Park?**

Contact the City Parks' Operations Manager at (804) 646-0199 or visit [www.richmondgov.com/Parks/index.aspx](http://www.richmondgov.com/Parks/index.aspx)

### **Interested in Friends of Bryan Park?**

We are citizens of the Richmond metro area and beyond, dedicated to protecting and improving Joseph Bryan Park, a 262-acre City park listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We are a non-profit organization, and have published the 64-page *Illustrated History of Bryan Park*, still available for \$9.95, a self-guided walking tour, and many other park-related materials, available on our website. Please visit [www.friendsofbryanpark.org](http://www.friendsofbryanpark.org). You can email us at [info@friendsofbryanpark.org](mailto:info@friendsofbryanpark.org).

All contributions and donations are fully tax deductible. We appreciate your support. If you are a "tree-hugger and park-lover," enjoy the park and wish to become a friend, are part of a group looking for community service projects, or wish to volunteer to help maintain the park, please consider joining us.

**We hope we'll see you soon in beautiful Bryan Park!**





**Mystery Tree Answer: Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)**



For more information about the Friends of Bryan Park, scan this QR code with your smart phone to go to our web site.