

Connecticut College Arboretum -- Native Plant Collection



Self-Guided Tour

This tour, which begins at the notice board just inside the main entrance to the Native Plant Collection on Williams Street, is an introduction to the 25-acre collection of trees and shrubs native to eastern North America, and to some of southern New England's common biological communities. The main trail is approximately 2 miles long and should take about 1 hour to complete at a leisurely pace. In addition, there are two optional loops, the first leading to a bog and the second through a former Hemlock forest. Numbered station markers are located at a variety of interesting sites. Common native trees are labeled along the way for easy identification. Intersections are marked with arrows. Full tour brochures are available at the notice board or the Arboretum office in Olin Science Center.

STATION 1 Red Maple Swamp

This site is fairly typical of a forested wetland which evolved around a streamlet. Wetlands serve many important ecological functions and support a fascinating display of plants and insects.

STATION 2 Magnolia Family

You are standing between two Tulip Trees planted in 1936. Native to the eastern United States and closely related to Magnolias, they have distinctive flowers in late May and June and cone like fruiting structures in fall.

STATION 3 Gries Memorial Native Conifer Collection

The 3-acre area features native northeastern conifers and includes selected cultivated varieties. This area also features a small wildflower meadow as demonstration of an alternative to mowing lawns.

STATION 4 Arboretum Pond

You are standing on a dam which was built in 1924 to create a pond for students to ice skate. The pond is used regularly by the College for biology and environmental studies classes.

STATION 5 Bolleswood Natural Area

The tree, shrub and herbaceous species growing in the Bolleswood Natural Area are representative of those in many woodlands of southeastern Connecticut. The conifer most frequently encountered in our woods was Eastern Hemlock.

STATION 5a Sphagnum-Heath Bog

Bogs are rather uncommon in southern New England and of great interest to naturalists because they contain many unique species adapted to the nutrient-poor, acidic, waterlogged environment.

STATION 6 Oak-Hickory Forest

You are standing at the base of a south-facing slope which has been planted with various native nut trees, predominantly Hickory.

STATION 6a Rock Outcrops

The Bolleswood Natural Area has remained largely undisturbed by human activity since the early 1950s. Due to the rock ledge, this area was unfavorable for agriculture and was never completely deforested. One of its many educational uses is for research on changes in plant and animal populations over time.

STATION 7 Buck Lodge

This rustic stone building was a gift from the Buck family to the Arboretum in 1937.

STATION 8 White Pine

This White Pine was planted at the edge of the Outdoor Theater in 1940 to replace a large pine lost to the 1938 hurricane. The original tree is the basis for the Arboretum logo.

STATION 9 Holly Collection

Members of the Holly family are dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers grow on separate plants. This explains why only some plants, the females, have the characteristic red berries.