About The Louise Arnold Tanger Arboretum

Louise Arnold Tanger, a naturalist and neighbor of the then Lancaster County Historical Society (now LancasterHistory), offered to plant trees to the barren grounds when the building was constructed in 1956. An all-volunteer group, The Friends of the Tanger Arboretum, a subsidiary organization of LancasterHistory, now cares for the Arboretum which covers 11 acres and boasts over 140 varieties of trees and shrubs. The Tanger Arboretum is open to the public from dawn to dusk. There is no admission fee, but donations are appreciated and members to the Friends of the Arboretum are encouraged.
Notable Trees in the Tanger Arboretum

Red Maple (#7) This tree is one of the largest Red Maples in the state and is very old for its species. The tree is potentially 275 years old and may have been here when James Buchanan owned Wheatland (1848–1868).

American Chestnut (#20) American Chestnuts were one of the most common trees in the eastern United States, but were decimated by a blight in the early 1900s. To save the American Chestnut, many of the trees today have been crossed with the Chinese Chestnut to improve its resistance to fungal diseases, including the American Chestnut.

Dove Tree (#44, 45) The Dove Tree, also called the handkerchief tree or ghost tree, is known for its remarkable blooms in May. While the flowers themselves are small and greenish yellow in color, the bracts (a modified leaf attached near the flower) resemble perching doves, waving handkerchiefs, or floating ghosts.

Tricolor Beech (#56) This tree features unique leaves that start as a bright pink in spring that fade into the summer. Compare the leaves to the Copper Beech (#52) and the Purple Beech (#55).

Franklin Tree (#59) Named in honor of Benjamin Franklin, the ancestors of this tree were found in Georgia and sent to Bartram’s Garden near Philadelphia in 1773. Now extinct in the wild, all Franklin trees derive from those individuals. It is closely related to the adjacent Stewartia (#128).

Eastern Black Walnut (#74) Black Walnuts are prized for their wood to make furniture and cabinets. They are also extremely competitive trees that produce their own natural herbicide. This herbicide kills or stunts plants and trees near the Black Walnut’s base, ensuring the tree receives the most water and nutrients.

Tulip Poplar (#81) Neither a tulip nor a poplar, this tree is more closely related to magnolias. It is a fast and straight-growing hardwood, and was historically sourced to produce wide boards and craft dugout canoes.

Dawn Redwood (#91) The Dawn Redwood is a remarkable conifer that turns yellow and drops its needles in the fall. The species was thought to be extinct until some were discovered in China in the 1940s. This particular specimen in the Tanger Arboretum was planted in the 1950s.

Mulberry (#92) This particular tree is a red mulberry, a Pennsylvania native. Mulberry trees are essential for silk production as they provide food for silkworms. Silk was produced in Lancaster County before the American Revolution. Colonists hoped it could supplant the supply from China. Imported white mulberries were said to produce a better quality of silk and many were planted in the area. Their weedy descendents still plague local gardeners.

Sycamore (#109) Sycamores can grow to astonishing size and are known for their expansive roots and unique camouflage-looking bark. The largest Sycamore in Lancaster County measures 25 feet in circumference and is hollow.

Yellow Chestnut Oak (#117) Also known as a Chinkapin Oak, the tree bears the Latin name Quercus muehlenbergii, in honor of Gotthilf Muhlenberg. Muhlenberg was an amateur botanist and served as pastor at Lancaster’s Trinity Lutheran Church from 1780–1815.

Pennsylvania Champion Trees

A Pennsylvania Champion Tree is the largest tree of its species within the state of Pennsylvania. As of 2023, the Tanger Arboretum is home to two Champion Trees:

Black Maple (#9) Black Maples are closely related to Sugar Maples, and are known for their straight, thick trunks and wide spreading branches. Black Maples are typically found in the Midwestern States.

Himalayan Pine (#108) Himalayan Pines are considered to be one of the most handsome trees in the genus Pinus. They are commonly found in eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan and India, Nepal, and China. The Himalayan Pine features long, drooping needles with large pine cones.

Learn more about Pennsylvania Champion Trees: at pabigtrees.com

Updated March 2023 | Map Produced by LancasterHistory