

# A Tour of the Woody Flora Found in Parsons Cemetery

Salisbury, Maryland

This walking tour was created to highlight various tree and ornamental shrub species found in Parsons Cemetery.



Tour created by Dr. Brent Zaprowski - Current as of October 2025

This tour covers a walking distance of approximately 1.25 miles.  
The tour starts and ends at the cemetery office.



This tour was designed to be followed on a standard cell phone held horizontally.

The first 15 stops are found on a loop which starts at the cemetery office. Proceed east up Lane 2 and past Bishop's Circle to Stop 6.



# 1. Eastern Red Cedar - *Juniperus virginiana*



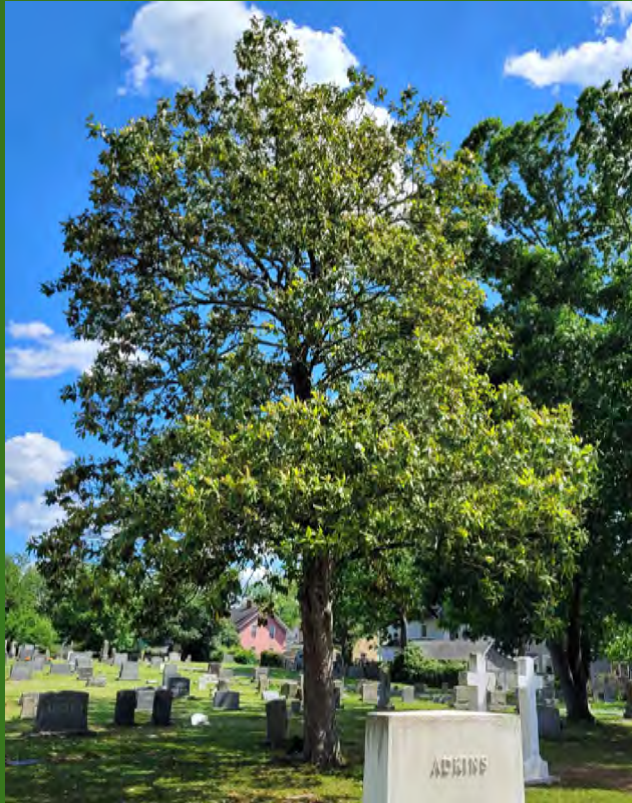
The Eastern Red Cedar is the most common species of tree in Parsons Cemetery. They can be recognized by their unique bark, which peels into thin strips.

# 1. Eastern Red Cedar - *Juniperus virginiana*



The Eastern Red Cedar is a dioecious tree, meaning that some trees are males and some trees are females. The females will produce the blue “cones” as shown above.

## 2. Southern Magnolia - *Magnolia grandiflora*



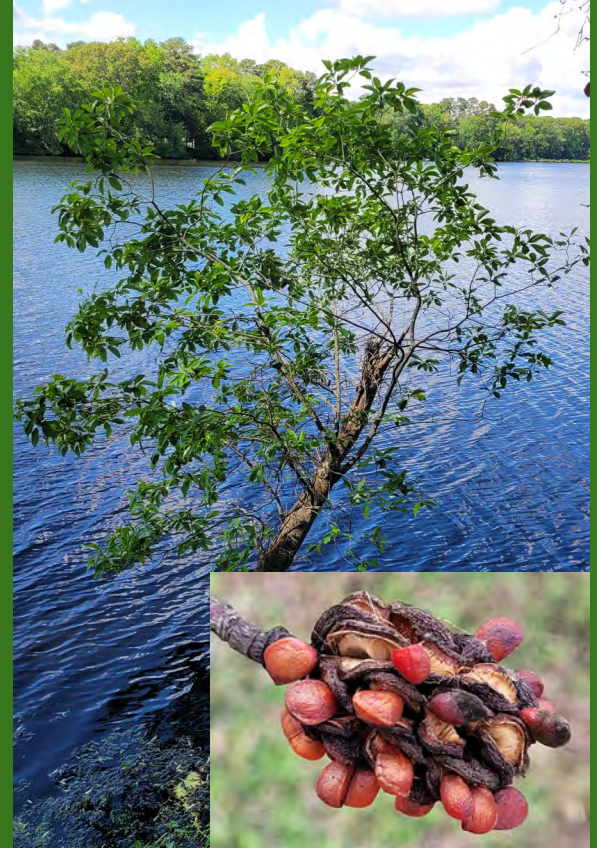
There are several magnificent Southern Magnolias in Parsons. In some cultures, magnolias are symbolic of endurance and resilience. They produce large, fragrant flowers in the spring.

### 3. White Oak - *Quercus alba*



Behind the Southern Magnolia is a beautiful example of a White Oak. White Oak wood is prized for making barrels for wine and whiskey.

## 4. Sweetbay Magnolia - *Magnolia virginiana*



This is one of six Sweetbay Magnolia trees planted in Parsons Cemetery with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. An example of a mature Sweetbay Magnolia can be seen along the shoreline of Johnson Pond behind Stop 25.

## 5. Swamp Chestnut Oak - *Quercus michauxii*



This is the only example of a Swamp Chestnut Oak in Parsons. This tree is also called a Basket Oak, because the wood splits easily into long strips and is excellent for making baskets.

## 6. Norway Maple - *Acer platanoides*



Norway Maples were introduced to North America in the mid-1700s and have since become a common shade tree in urban areas.

## 7. Common Juniper - *Juniperus communis*



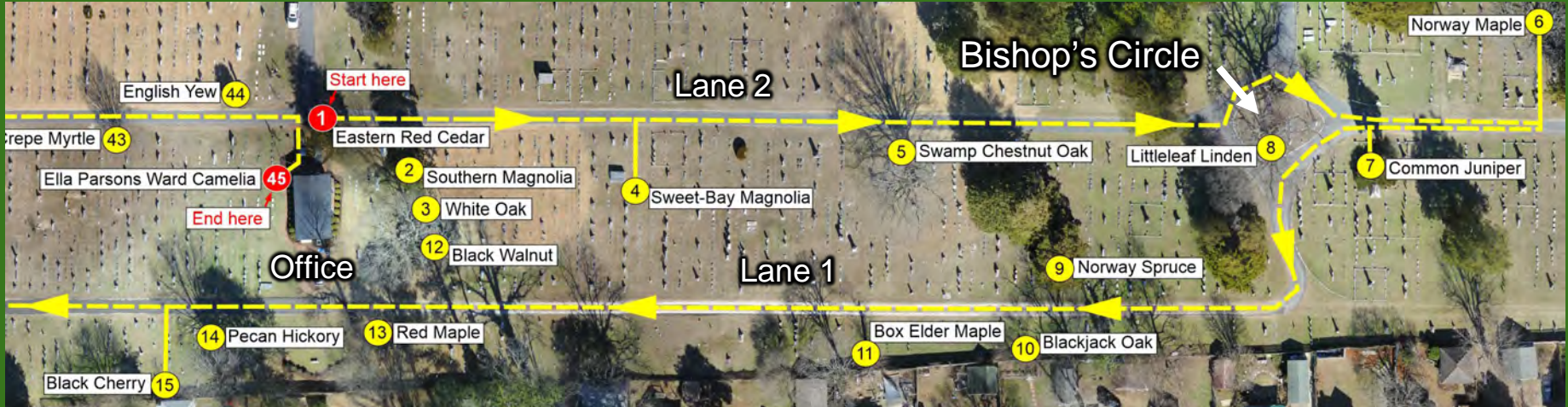
These are the only examples of Common Juniper in Parsons. Juniper "berries" (which are really modified cones) are a key flavoring ingredient in gin and are also used in cooking, including flavoring meats, sauces, and stuffings.

## 8. Littleleaf Linden - *Tilia cordata*



Both large trees in Bishop's Circle are Littleleaf Linden. Old linden trees like these have been revered in many cultures and were used as places where people gathered to create laws. Linden trees are also called Basswood trees.

From Bishop's Circle to head south then west on Lane 1 to visit Stops 9-15.



## 9. Norway Spruce - *Picea abies*



This is the only Norway Spruce in Parsons. Norway Spruces are not native to the United States, but are found throughout the U.S. They have been known to live 1000 years.

## 10. Blackjack Oak - *Quercus marilandica*



This is the only example of a Blackjack Oak in Parsons. Blackjack Oaks have very dense wood and are commonly used for barbeque in Oklahoma.

## 11. Box Elder Maple - *Acer negundo*



This is the only example of a Box Elder Maple in Parsons. A storm broke off the top portion of the tree, but it has rebounded nicely since then.

## 12. Black Walnut - *Juglans nigra*



This is the only example of a mature Black Walnut in Parsons. Black Walnuts release juglone, a chemical that can kill or inhibit the growth of certain plants in their vicinity. This property is called allelopathy.

## 13. Red Maple - *Acer rubrum*



This is the oldest and largest of the Red Maple trees in Parsons. The other red maples can be seen along the banks of Johnson Pond. Red Maples grow in a wide range of environments, from dry to wet.

## 14. Pecan Hickory – *Carya illinoensis*



This is one of two examples of a Pecan Hickory in Parsons. The name "pecan" comes from a Native American word meaning "nuts requiring a stone to crack". There are over 1,000 varieties of pecans.

## 15. Black Cherry - *Prunus serotina*



Although this isn't the largest Black Cherry tree in Parsons, it's the most accessible. The leaves, twigs, bark and seeds contain cyanogenic glycoside. When eaten, hydrogen cyanide is released, which is toxic to animals and humans.

From Stop 15, continue west on Lane 1 to Stop 16, which is a cluster of three large Southern Red Oaks on the right.



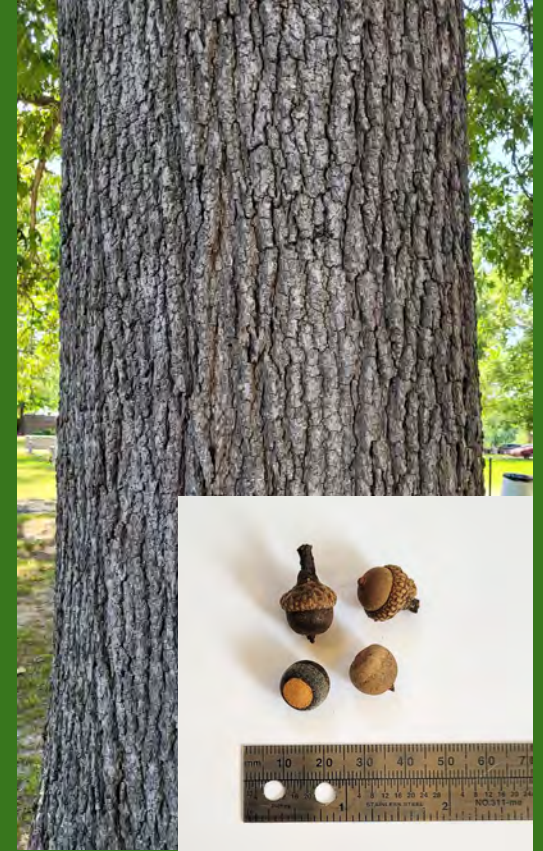
Continue down Lane 1 to Stops 17 and 18, then follow the Cremation Trail along the shoreline of Johnson Pond to Stops 19-21.

After Stop 21 proceed up the stairs back to main road.

Once you reach the road, veer slightly right to reach Lane 2.

Then walk a short distance east on Lane 2 to reach Stop 22.

## 16. Southern Red Oak - *Quercus falcata*



Most of the large trees you see in this part of the Parsons are oak trees of various types. The three oaks at this stop are all Southern Red Oaks.

## 17. Black Oak - *Quercus velutina*



Black Oak trees can be found in a variety of habitats, including upland woods and sandy flats. Black Oak acorns were a major part of American Indian diets and are still collected today.

## 18. Post Oak - *Quercus stellata*



Post Oak leaves look distinctly different from the red oak leaves. Post Oaks have a tough wood which is used to make posts, hence the common name “post oak”.

## 19. Mockernut Hickory - *Carya tomentosa*



The Mockernut Hickory is known for its strong wood and edible nuts. The nuts have a very thick husk which makes them hard to open, thus the common name “mockernut hickory.”

## 20. Sand Hickory - *Carya pallida*



Right next to the Mockernut Hickory is a Sand Hickory. Sand Hickory trees prefer sandy soils which are common on the Coastal Plains of the U.S.

## 21. Loblolly Pine - *Pinus taeda*

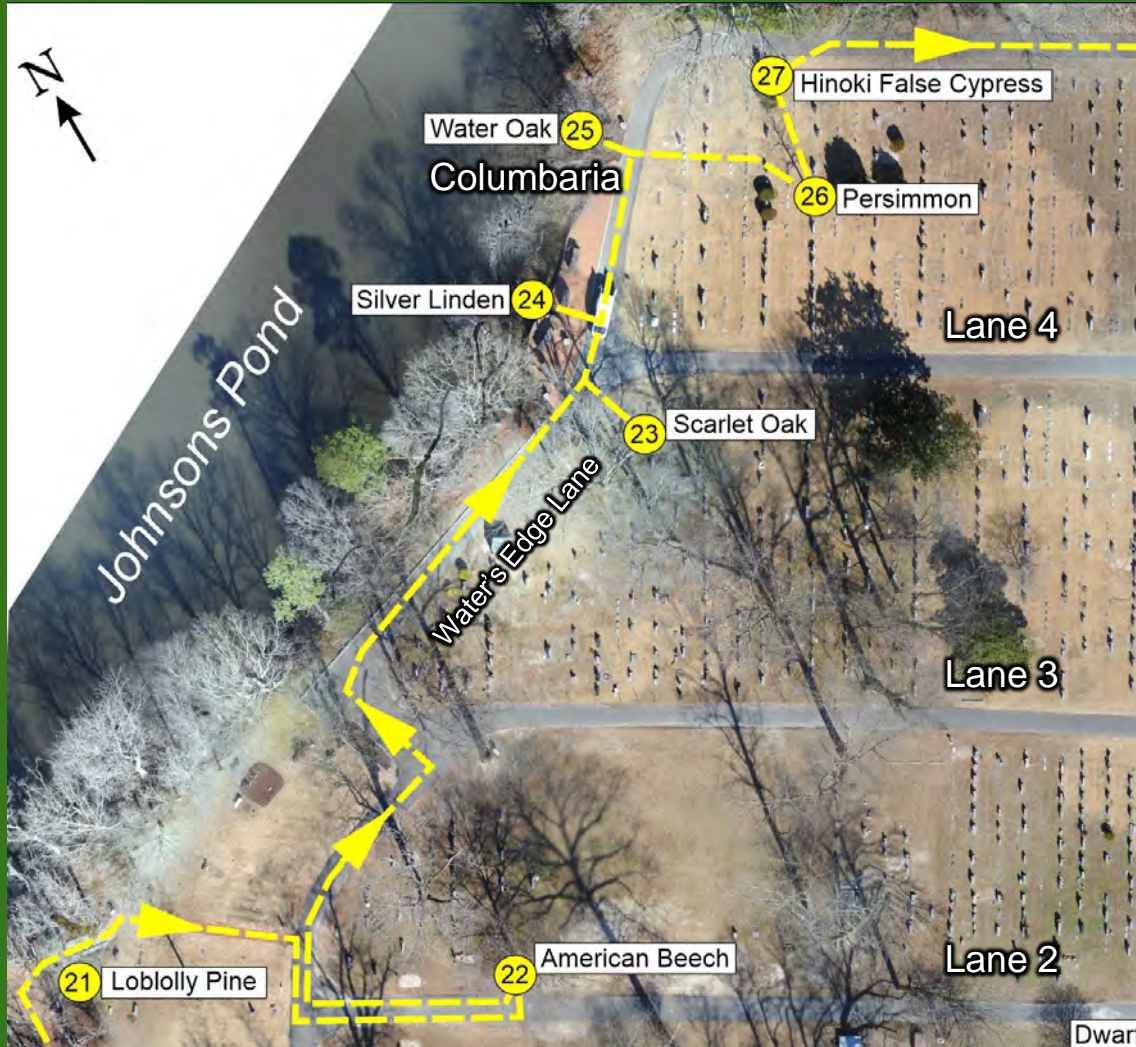


There are only two examples of Loblolly Pines in Parsons, and both are found along the banks of Johnson Pond. Loblolly Pine seeds were taken to space on Apollo 14 and later planted at the White House.

## 22. American Beech - *Fagus grandifolia*



Beech is commonly associated with femininity and in Celtic mythology, Fagus was the God of beech trees. In France, the nuts are roasted and used as a coffee substitute.



After Stop 22, follow Lane 2 back to Water's Edge Lane and head north to Stops 23-25.

After Stop 25, you will leave the road briefly to visit Stops 26-27.

## 23. Scarlet Oak - *Quercus coccinea*



As the name implies, scarlet oaks have bright red leaves in the fall. Roasted acorns from this tree have been used by Native Americans and pioneers as a substitute for coffee.

## 24. Silver Linden - *Tilia tomentosa*



These Silver Linden trees are only found in Parsons behind the Columbaria. They are much smaller in diameter than the Littleleaf Linden trees seen at Stop 8 but they have distinctly larger leaves.

## 25. Water Oak - *Quercus nigra*



As the name implies, Water Oak trees can grow in wet areas. While the Water Oak is a fast-growing tree, it's relatively short-lived, compared to other oaks, often living only 30 to 50 years.

## 26. Persimmon – *Diospyros virginiana*



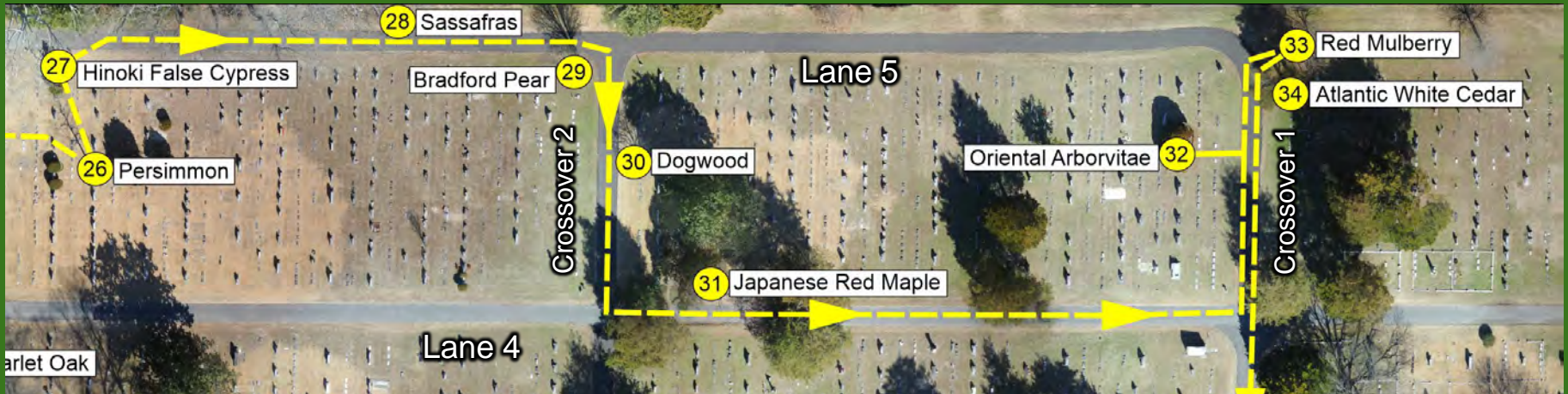
This is one of two examples of a Persimmon tree in Parsons. Like Red Cedars, Persimmons are dioecious trees, so they won't bear fruit unless a male and female are both present. They have a distinctive checkerboard bark pattern.

## 27. Hinoki False Cypress - *Chamaecyparis obtusa*



As the name implies, the Hinoki False Cypress is not a true cypress. It's native to Japan and Taiwan and is prized for its fragrant wood. It is often used in bonsai art.

After Stop 27, Proceed to Lane 5. Follow Lane 5 until you reach Crossover 2 at Stop 29. Follow the crossover south to Lane 4. Follow Lane 4 east past Stop 31 to the top of the hill. Take a left onto Crossover 1 to reach Stops 32-34.



## 28. Sassafras - *Sassafras albidum*



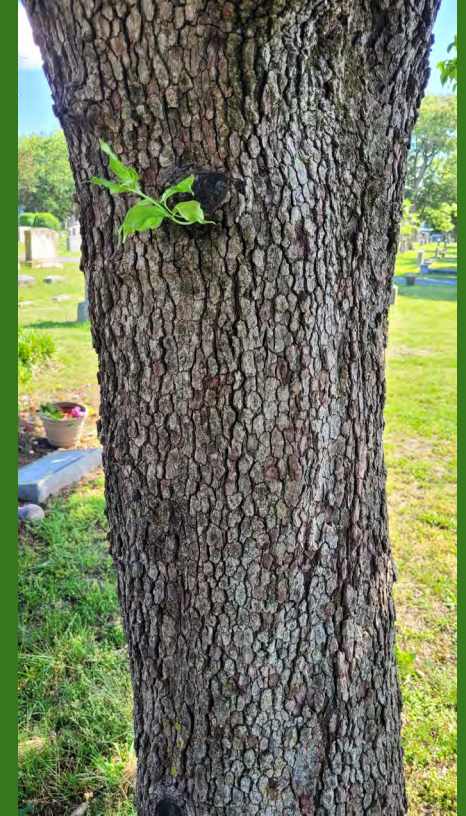
This cluster of young Sassafras trees are the only examples in Parsons. Sassafras trees display two types of leaves as shown above. Sassafras roots have been traditionally used to flavor root beer.

## 29. Bradford or Callery Pear - *Pyrus calleryana*



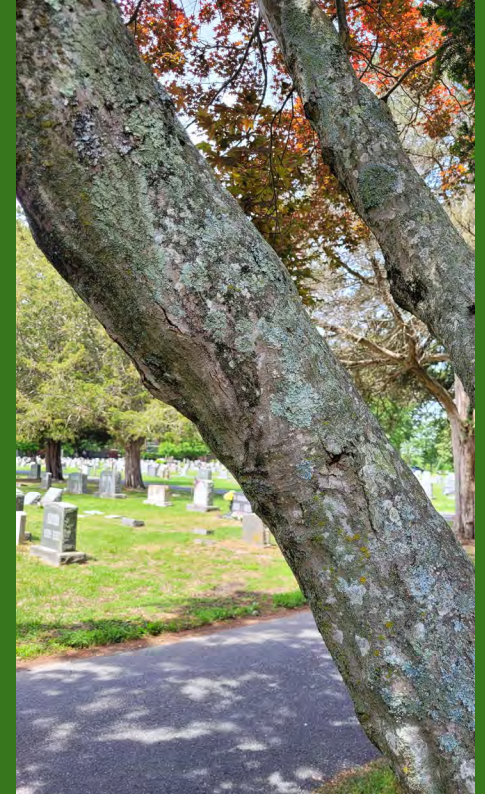
Bradford or Callery Pear trees are considered an invasive species, and many states have outlawed their sale. These trees are known to outcompete native species, reducing biodiversity and disrupting ecosystems

## 30. Flowering Dogwood - *Cornus florida*



Dogwood trees have been used to symbolize life, rebirth or joy. Legend also has it that Dogwood was used to create the cross Jesus was crucified on.

## 31. Japanese Red Maple - *Acer palmatum*



This is the only example of a Japanese Red Maple in Parsons. Japanese horticulturalists have an extensive history of creating cultivars from maples found in Japan, Korea and China. There are over 1000 cultivars of this species of maple.

## 32. Oriental Arborvitae - *Platycladus orientalis*



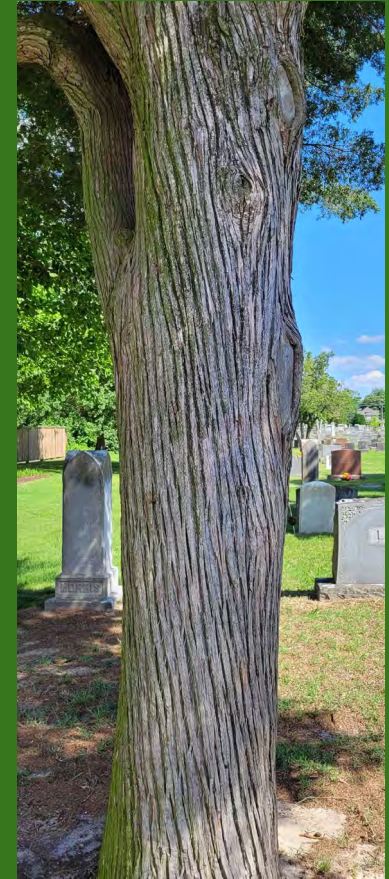
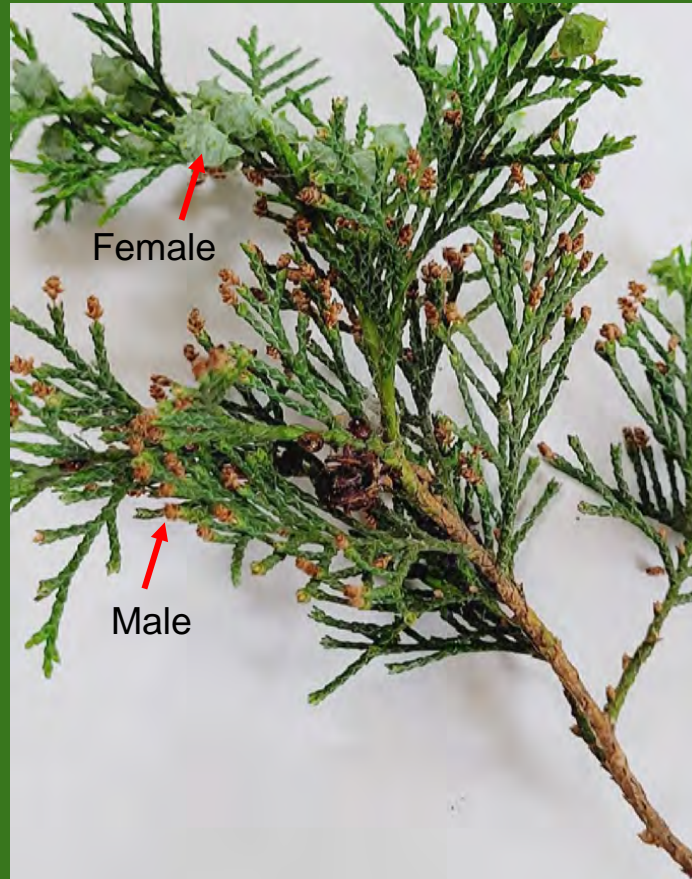
Oriental Arborvitae are not true arborvitae (Genus *Thuja*) but have a similar look to them. They are native to parts of East and North Asia.

### 33. White Mulberry – *Morus alba*



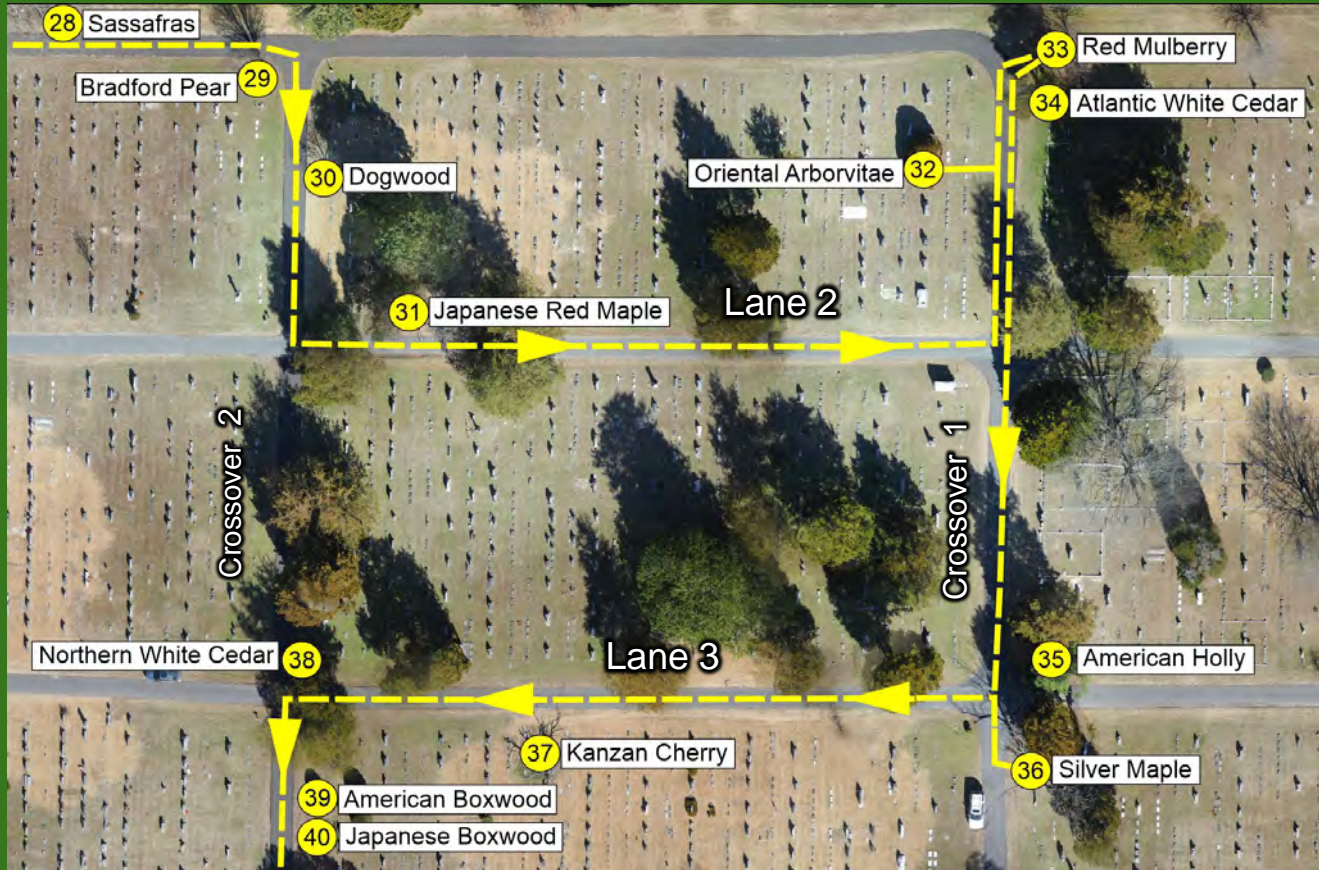
White Mulberry trees are native to northern China and are considered an invasive species, outcompeting native Red Mulberries. They are commonly found along fences and hedgerows as the seeds are spread readily by birds.

## 34. Atlantic White Cedar – *Chamaecyparis thyoides*



Although Atlantic White Cedar trees look a lot like Red Cedar trees, you can tell the difference by their distinctive spiral bark pattern. They are also monoecious trees meaning the male and female reproductive structures are on the same tree.

From Stop 34, follow Crossover 1 south to reach Stops 35-36 on Lane 3. Then travel west along Lane 3 past Stops 37-38 to reach Crossover 2.



## 35. American Holly - *Ilex opaca*



American Holly trees are evergreens which are native to the Eastern U.S. and are famously known for their bright red berries and dark green waxy leaves.

## 36. Silver Maple - *Acer saccharinum*



This is the only example of a Silver Maple in Parsons. Silver Maples are one of the most common trees in the United States. The name comes from the silvery underside of their leaves.

## 37. Kanzan Cherry - *Prunus serrulata*



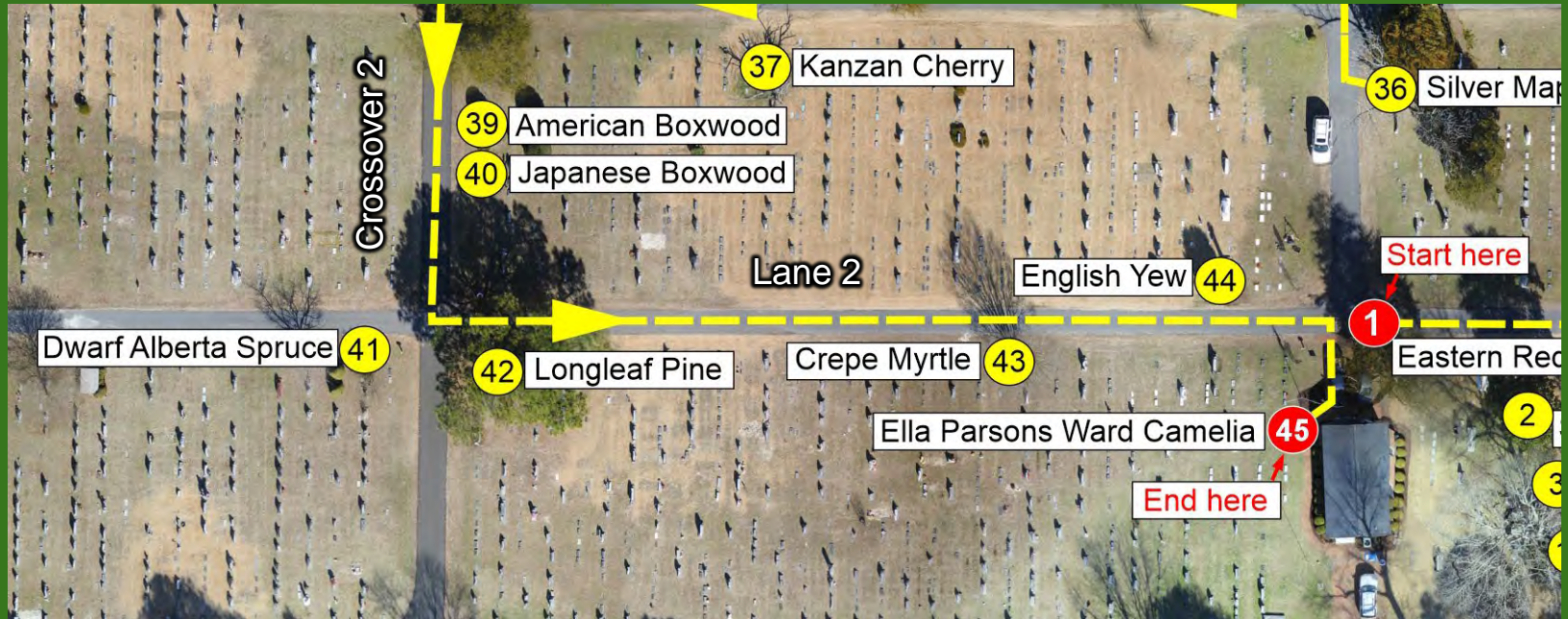
This is the only example of a Kanzan Cherry in Parsons. If you are lucky enough to be in Parsons in the early spring, you will be treated to a wonderful display of beautiful pink flowers. Unfortunately, this mature cherry tree is showing its age.

## 38. Northern White Cedar - *Thuja occidentalis*



Northern White Cedar trees aren't true cedar trees; they are a type of Arborvitae. White cedar trees contain a high amount of vitamin C and were used to cure scurvy.

From Stop 39, follow Crossover 2 south past Stops 39-40 to Lane 2 and Stop 41. Then walk east on Lane 2 to visit Stops 42-44 before finally ending back at the office at Stop 45.



39. American Boxwood - *Buxus sempervirens*

40. Japanese Boxwood - *Buxus microphylla*



Boxwoods are the most common type of decorative shrub in Parsons Cemetery.

At first glance it's hard to see the difference between the two species.



American Boxwoods have longer, pointed leaves whereas the Japanese Boxwoods have rounded leaves.



## 41. Dwarf Alberta Spruce - *Picea glauca*



Dwarf Alberta Spruce trees are a native to Alberta, Canada and were first discovered in 1904. They are essentially a mutation of a White Spruce (*Picea glauca*).

## 42. Longleaf Pine - *Pinus palustris*



This is the only example of a Longleaf Pine in Parsons. As the name implies, this pine has very long needles and very large cones. Traditionally they have been used as a source of tar to make turpentine.

## 43. Crepe Myrtle – *Lagerstroemia sp.*



There are several Crepe Myrtle trees in Parsons. They come in a variety of sizes and leaf colors. They bloom for 100 days from late spring through early summer, earning them the name “Tree of 100 Days”. The flowers can be white or pink.

## 44. English Yew- *Taxus baccata*



English Yew are common evergreen decorative shrubs and trees. As the name implies, they are native to Western Europe and England. Their strong, flexible wood was prized for making longbows.

## 45. Ella Ward Parsons Camelia – *Camellia japonica*



Our tour ends with the most common flowering shrub in Parsons. This species of Camelia was bred and named for his wife by Allison Parsons, one of the main benefactors of Parsons Cemetery. Over 60 have been planted throughout the cemetery.

You have now reached the end of this tour -  
Thanks for visiting Parsons Cemetery!



If you enjoyed this tour, please consider donating to Parsons Cemetery Perpetual Care Endowment Fund, which helps maintain the landscaping in Parsons Cemetery: <https://parsonscemetery.com/donate/>