

From Shade Tree Committee

MONTGOMERY ARBORETUM OF NATIVE FLORA

Location

The Arboretum is located in Montgomery Park. It extends from the lower parking lot, along Harlingen Road, to Mill Pond Road. Four entry signs welcome visitors along the path: at the lower parking lot, at Harlingen Road across from the detention basin on Wood Violet Way, at the Harlingen Road bend, and on Mill Pond Road not far from Bridgepoint village. The Arboretum is open from dawn to dusk.

Parking

You can park at the entry to the Arboretum in the lower parking lot of Montgomery Park. Another parking lot is near the two playing fields on Harlingen Road.

Growing a Plant Collection

The Arboretum was started in 1997 by Montgomery Township and the Shade Tree Committee with a Green Acres grant. Since then many additions have been made, and there are now more than a hundred new trees. The Arboretum illustrates the richness of species of trees and shrubs native to Eastern North America, and particularly to New Jersey. Its aim is to educate the public and demonstrate how those species can be grown to best advantage in the home landscape. Trees are labeled and there are two interpretive signs. There are also brochures with maps available at the map shelter in the lower parking lot in Montgomery Park.

Many rare species or forms can be found here. You can see here a round lobed sweetgum that doesn't form gumballs, a male Kentucky coffee tree with no pods and a male Osage orange with no fruit. There is an oak that looks like a willow, and another from which shingles are made. Rarely seen pond cypresses make the best of a vast wetland. American beech may surprise you at a stream bank. A magnolia that sports cucumbers for seeds? There is more.

The spring bloom parade starts with witchhazels, shadblows, redbuds and silverbells. Red buckeyes, blackhaws, sweetbays and hawthorns follow suit.

Don't miss specimen hickories and oaks in the flood plain near Pike Brook and the spectacle of color in the fall throughout the Arboretum.

The Arboretum is also becoming a haven for wildlife. The variety of plants creates a sustainable environment that minimizes insect damage and disease, not only in the Arboretum, but also in the lands surrounding it.

Features

The Arboretum is a place of great beauty and epitomizes what is best in the Montgomery landscape. The one-mile pathway loop through the Arboretum winds its way over four footbridges. Those on the small streams let you take a closer look at the wetland plants and birds. From the long bridge over Pike Brook there are lovely views of the water, a large shagbark hickory and the male Osage orange. There are picnic tables and benches, a

concession stand, toilets and a children's playground nearby. The Arboretum loop is not just for pleasurable walking but also for bird watching, hiking, jogging and bicycling.

Views

Once you get to the top of the hill a sweeping view of the Sourland Mountain unfolds. Two historic houses and barns can be seen along the path. The Galick House, visible from the metal bridge, was once part of the farm on which Montgomery Park was built. Its old time neighbor, the Dehart House, gave the name to the street in the neighborhood. Both houses date back to c.1870.

Links with Greenbelts

The Arboretum is an essential part of Montgomery's green belts and pathway system. It hugs Pike Brook, the largest stream in the township, and forms a natural buffer protecting the quality of the water. A short walk down the path leads to the historic village of Bridgepoint and a raised walkway through wetlands. The village clusters around a three-arch stone bridge (pre 1825) that also serves as an emblem of Montgomery, and includes the miller's cottage (c.1740), grist mill (c.1800), dam, and several barns. Many artists come to paint there; others come to fish, skate or picnic.

Rare Birds

Rare birds have been spotted in the arboretum: bobolink, upland sandpiper, grasshopper sparrow, savannah sparrow and vesper sparrow. The meadows are those species best friends. Keep your binoculars handy to enjoy the birds.

Memorial Trees

Memorial trees can be planted to honor family members, celebrate anniversaries and other special occasions, or to recognize an achievement by an individual or an organization. Such gifts make the Arboretum a very personal and more beautiful place for many residents and their families. A donation of \$300 makes it possible to plant a memorial tree, with a plaque indicating the botanical name and in whose memory the tree is planted. Larger gifts enable us to place a bench with a memorial inscription. To find out more details write to us: shadetreecommittee@twp.montgomery.nj.us .