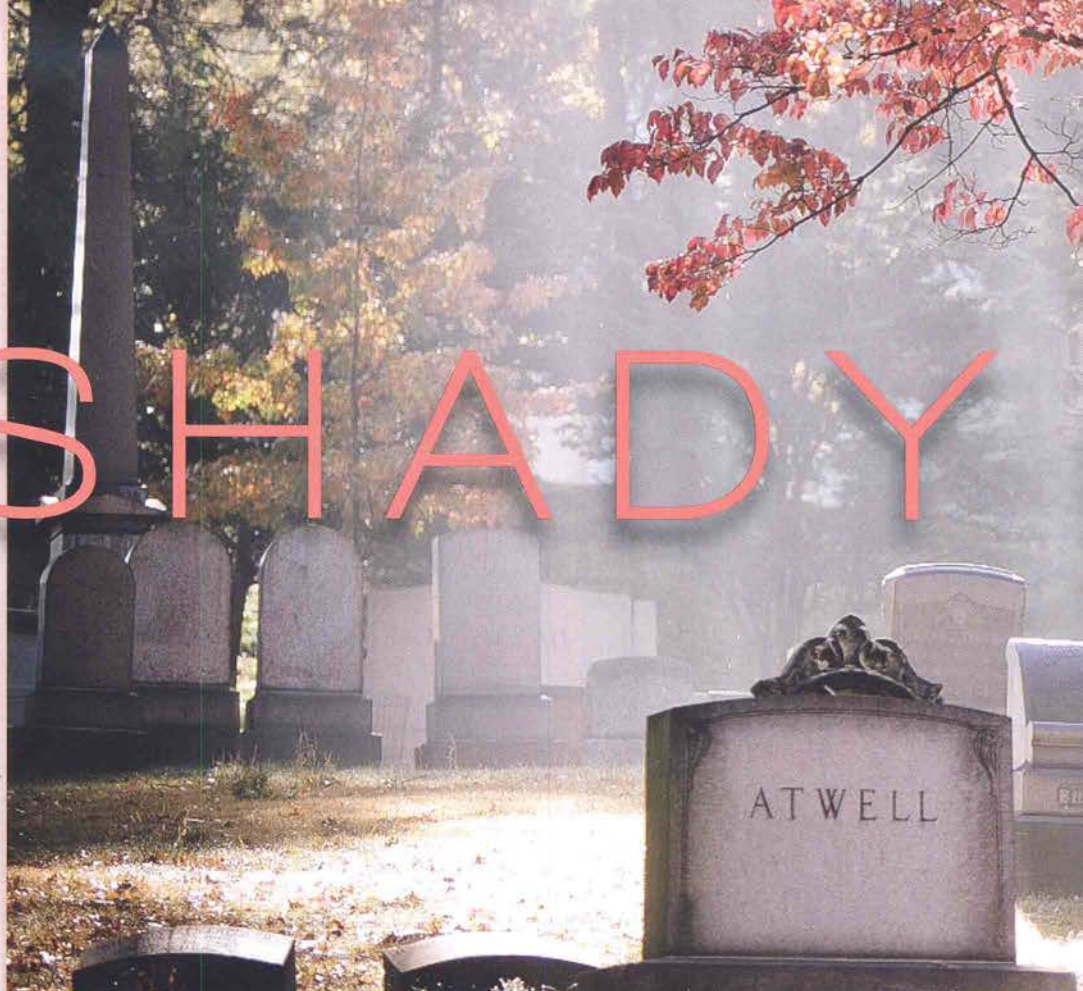


This dogwood tree is native to Pennsylvania and a source of poignant beauty amongst headstones in Allegheny Cemetery.

As the days lengthen
and the buds on
branches and
limbs above us burst
open, an arboretum
provides a lovely
opportunity to
welcome spring and
experience the beauty
and variety of Mother
Nature's trees. Did
you know that there
are several
noteworthy ones
nearby?

BY **DEBORAH WEISBERG**

SHADY



While Pittsburgh abounds in public parks, people who value green space may be surprised to know that the city also boasts a number of internationally accredited arboreta—botanical gardens devoted to trees—and they're all in or around the East End.

They include The Frick Pittsburgh, the Chatham University and Carnegie Mellon University campuses, and The Homewood and Allegheny cemeteries.

Each is among just 426 arboreta in 33 countries to have been recognized for the abundance and diversity of their trees, shrubs, and woody ornamentals by ArbNet, the Illinois-based nonprofit that sets standards for excellence in community forests.

Being part of a global network helps to highlight the aesthetic and environmental importance of cultivating woodland habitats, especially in a city setting where retaining trees is an ongoing challenge, says Matt Erb, an International Society of Arborists (ISA) certified arborist who, as director of urban forestry for Tree Pittsburgh, has helped guide the development of local arboreta.

"Between 2010 and 2015, Pittsburgh lost 1,000 trees that were cleared by developers or by homeowners who decided they were tired of raking leaves," he says. "That's 1,000 fewer trees absorbing storm-water runoff, filtering air pollutants, and providing habitat for owls, hawks, songbirds, and other wildlife."

The free guided tours and other outreach that ArbNet requires for accreditation helps to foster a greater appreciation of trees and, along with it, a desire to conserve them, Erb says.

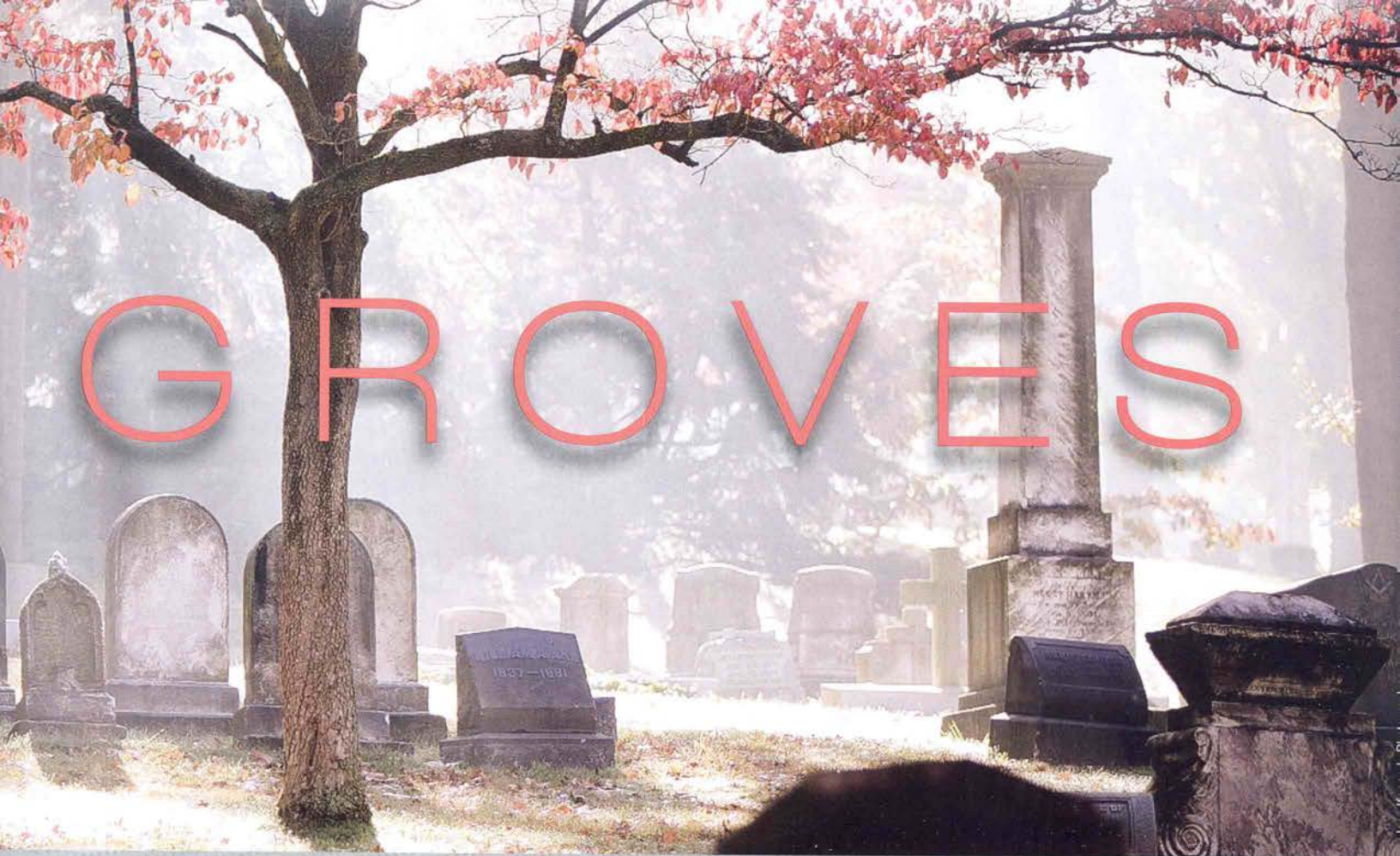


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THE HOMEWOOD AND ALLEGHENY CEMETERIES

Courtesy of The Homewood Cemetery



Japanese maples form a striking backdrop to a pond adorned with ornamental grasses at The Homewood Cemetery. Verdant spots like this are a favorite among visitors to the cemetery arboretum.

ArbNet accreditation was a natural next step in the tree program at each of these sister cemeteries, says ISA-certified arborist Stephen Foley, who developed their arboretum master plans.

"When Homewood was accredited in 2014 it was one of just 23 American cemeteries to have that designation," he says, noting that Allegheny followed in 2019.

Burial grounds represent a fast-growing segment of officially designated arboreta well-suited to ArbNet's mission, says ArbNet coordinator Sue Paist.

"The cemetery group has really caught on in the past five years as people realize they are more than cemeteries, especially on the East Coast where there are so many beautiful tree collections. You're very woody out there."

Because Homewood is a lawn park-style cemetery, a style characterized by a pastoral setting, trees have been planted strategically over time to enhance—rather than dominate—its 200-acre landscape.

More than 40 species are represented in the Point Breeze cemetery, including towering oaks, London planes, and horse chestnuts, with an understory of flowering dogwoods, ornamental Japanese maples and other smaller varieties. Standout specimens include an iconic weeping willow at the cemetery's lily pond, and a weeping beech that graces the grave of industrialist Henry Aiken.

There's also an impressive array of hemlocks, cypress, pine, and spruce to ensure year-round interest, Foley notes.

While a forested area was clear-cut to create The Homewood Cemetery from scratch in 1878, Allegheny Cemetery was built to work in harmony with woods that already existed on the grounds in 1844, Foley says of the 300-acre burial ground located in Lawrenceville and bounded by Bloomfield, Garfield, and Stanton Heights.

Plantings done since have been in keeping with Allegheny's rural style, an aesthetic designed to provide the public access to a landscaped, outdoor setting before public parks were developed. Today they include 26 kinds of native and non-native trees, namely white and northern red oaks, American beech, basswood, black gum, sugar and red maples, yellow buckeye, hackberry, hawthorn, pine, lin-

SHADY GROVES



Magnolia trees blooming in April add early splashes of color to The Homewood Cemetery each spring.



Japanese cherry trees in full springtime splendor make the Athletic and Fitness Center patio on the Chatham University campus all the more inviting.

den, and dogwood. Ornamental cultivars, chosen for aesthetics, include apple, pear, magnolia, fringe trees, yellow woods, and, Foley notes, "the beloved Japanese flowering cherry trees that delight guests in spring with beautiful flower displays in shades of pink, pale purple, and white."

Other standouts include dawn redwoods, a row of mature ginkgoes near the fountain lawn, and two giant sequoias "that aren't giant quite yet but with proper care and time will become impressive," Foley says.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

The 39-acre campus off aptly named Woodland Road showcases 125 different species of trees and small shrubs, according to Kristen Spirl, the grounds maintenance director and a state-certified arborist.

Chatham achieved accreditation in 2013, making it one of the first ArbNet-affiliated arboreta in Pittsburgh.

"Certification is important because it documents what we have on campus from the organization that sets forth the criteria," Spirl says, noting that Chatham is certified at Level II. "If it weren't for COVID, we would be at Level III, and that's what we are shooting for now."

Levels are based on the extent of species diversity, with at least 100 different varieties of trees for Level II and 500 for Level III, as well as how professionally these living museums are managed. Level IV is typically reserved for arboreta used in research and conservation.



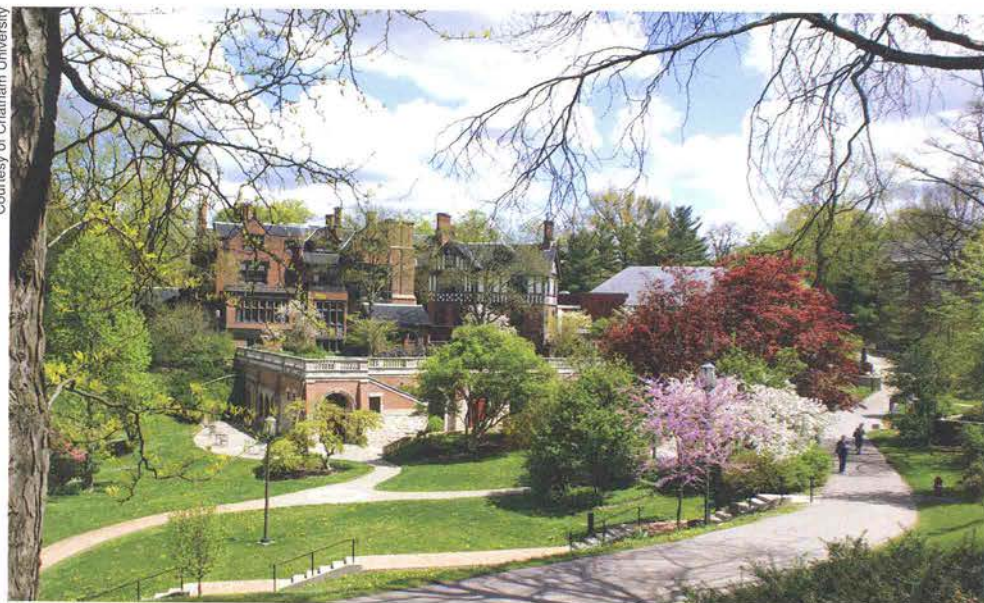
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The Chatham University arboretum is a study in color and texture, owing to a diversity of trees, shrubs, and woody ornamentals. Among the tree species pictured are dogwood, eastern redbud, Siebold's crabapple, Japanese maple, tulip, nannyberry, and Amur honeysuckle.

Similar to The Homewood and Allegheny cemeteries, Chatham's arboretum is considered non-traditional because, while being a community forest is not the university's primary function, it is nonetheless a valuable asset.

Chatham's tree collection includes seven varieties of magnolia, 10 kinds of oak, and half a dozen redbuds, such as weeping forest pansy, hearts of gold, and vanilla twist. In addition, there are copper and American beech, American elm, yew, eastern hemlock,

paw paw trees, four young giant sequoias, and two bald cypresses, one of which is estimated to be 120 years old.

Significant single specimens include a hawthorn tree planted in honor of the 9/11 victims, a blight-resistant chestnut bred and donated by the American Chestnut Foundation, and Japanese and Russian larches planted by visitors from both of those countries, Spirl says.

Among shrubs, there are six types of hydrangea, including oakleaf and Annabelle, as well as bottlebrush buckeye, beauty berry, summersweet, clethra alnifolia, fothergilla, Korean spice viburnum, witch hazel, and a native honeysuckle vine.

As with any garden, Chatham's arboretum is a work in progress, says Spirl, noting that some of the newer installations include several dwarf ginkgo biloba Mariken trees planted last fall. "They remind me of the lollipop trees in Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* and will delight some of our younger visitors."



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CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, CMU became ArbNet-accredited in 2019. It achieved Level I status and is now working to attain Level II status by adding educational elements to its arboretum, says Jenn Rogers, project manager at the university's facilities management and campus services department.

The tree collection on CMU's 140-acre campus includes 85 kinds of trees and 90 varieties of shrubs. "We have a beautiful aspen grove next to the Gates and Hillman centers, and my favorite is probably the katsura tree in the peace garden near the Frew Street entry to the Hall of Arts," Rogers says. "It smells like cotton candy in autumn and has a striking fall color—a mix of lemon, yellow, and apricot with rounded heart-shaped leaves."



Above: The fernlike foliage of this honey locust makes it a standout specimen near the CMU School of Drama.

Below: London planetrees line the campus grassy area known as "The Cut."





Mighty pin oaks, red and silver maples, lindens, and copper beech dot a grassy expanse on the east side of Clayton at The Frick Pittsburgh. In nice weather, visitors to the grounds often stroll, picnic, and loll about in the dappled sunlight of this elegant arboretum.

THE FRICK PITTSBURGH

Inasmuch as arboreta are living museums, accreditation was a perfect fit for the collection of trees at The Frick Pittsburgh in Point Breeze.

“What sets us apart from other local museums is that we have a 5½-acre green space,” says Amanda Gillen, the Frick’s director of learning and visitor experience.

A popular tree guide the Frick published years ago has been replaced by a mobile app visitors can use for self-guided tours.

The Frick’s treescape has evolved over many decades and includes specimens with sentimental value, such as those planted as living memorials to Frick family members, including a red maple for Henry Clay Frick and his wife Adelaide, a linden for Dr. Henry Clay Frick II, and a katsura for Helen Clay Frick.

Except for a row of 50 hemlocks that flank the parking lot, most trees on campus are deciduous varieties and include striking specimens such as the tri-color beech, with its mixture of green, pink, and white leaves that turn coppery in fall. “We have several beech varieties including weeping beech—some people call it the upside down tree—and copper beech,” says grounds manager Kim Rothert.

“Our oldest trees are London plane trees and tulip poplars. We also have saucer magnolias, horse chestnuts, Japanese maples, and Kentucky coffee trees,” says Rothert. “Those are a visitor favorite, especially when they drop their pods in fall.”

Encouraging visitors to appreciate the grounds of the Frick as much as they do its indoor collections is the impetus behind seeking arboretum certification, Gillen says. “When people see a lovely landscape, they absolutely want to know more about what they are looking at.” SA



The Frick Pittsburgh arboretum serves as an open-air concert hall on a Friday evening in summer, with music lovers gathering in the shade of a leafy canopy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

ALLEGHENY CEMETERY

Visit alleghecemetery.com and click on the About tab to learn more about the cemetery grounds and the nature that abounds there.

THE HOMEWOOD CEMETERY

Visit thehomewoodcemetery.com and click on Arboretum under the About tab. In-person visitors to the cemetery can pick up a J.R.R. Tolkien-style tree map designed by mapmaker Stentor Danielson in the cemetery office.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

Visit chatham.edu and click on Shadyside Campus under the Locations tab. There you'll find arboretum information and be able to download a tree guide and walking map.

THE FRICK PITTSBURGH

Visit thefrickpittsburgh.org and click on See and Do. Scroll down to download the Landscape app, or click on Greenhouse and Gardens for more information.