

Trees of the Washington State West Capitol Campus

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Trees of the Washington State West Capitol Campus

Welcome to the Washington State Capitol. The graceful landscape of the 50-acre West Capitol Campus is listed in the National Register of Historic places. Of the eleven capitol landscapes designed by the famous Olmsted Brothers landscape firm, including the U.S. Capitol, Olympia's is one of the most extensive and intact examples today. Work on the campus landscape began in 1911 and was largely completed by 1931, though planting has continued ever since.

There are over 100 species of trees on the Capitol grounds. The self-guided tour offered in this booklet highlights some of them and shares the history and stories behind others. Included are four species native to the Northwest. The Native American names for these trees are included in this booklet in Lushootseed, the language of the Squaxin Island people who originally inhabited this area.

At the center of the west campus is the Washington State Legislative Building, with its ornate dome. The Legislative Building contains the House and Senate chambers as well as offices of the House and Senate leadership, the offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer.

As you walk around the 50-acre campus, you will also see the Temple of Justice, where the Washington State Supreme Court sits, the Governor's Mansion, the John L. O'Brien Building, where members of the House of Representatives have their offices, the John A. Cherberg Building, where members of the Senate have their offices, and the Pritchard Building, the former State Library, all of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the buildings, you'll see impressive and thought-provoking memorials to Veterans of World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam and fallen Law Enforcement Officers.

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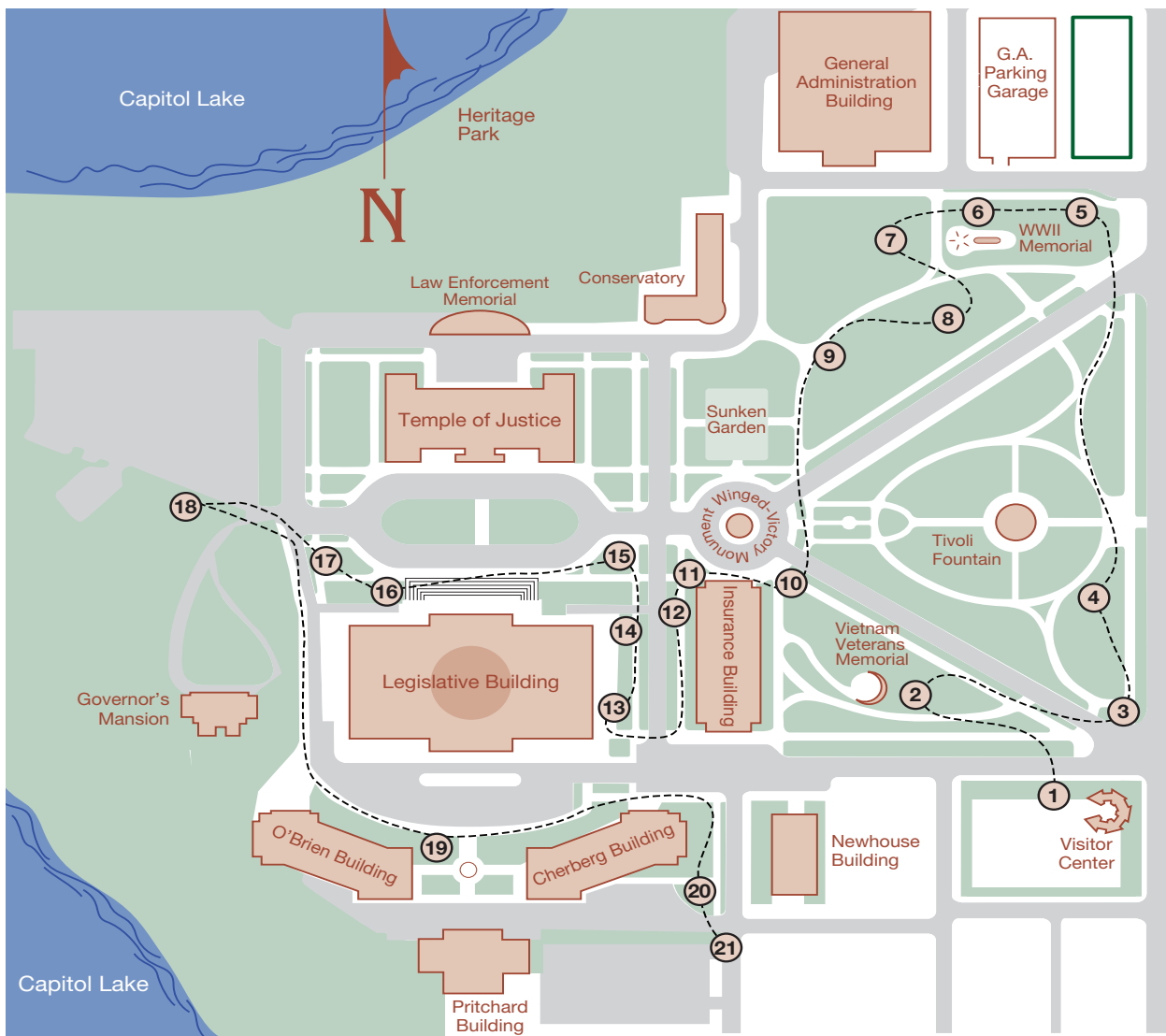
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The West Capitol Campus

The Washington State Capitol Campus included some of the last buildings to be built in the America Beautiful movement. The ornate Washington State Legislative Building, completed in 1928, has the tallest free-standing masonry dome in North America, at 287 feet.

The landscaping of the campus began as soon as the Capitol structures were completed and continues to this day. Among the contemporary additions are the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial east of the Insurance Building, the Korean War Memorial on a plaza east of the main campus and a Law Enforcement Officer Memorial north of the Temple of Justice.

1 Purple Beech*Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea*

Welcoming visitors to the Visitor Center stands a tall purple beech whose leaves are strikingly dark purple. Their deep maroon color, and the way they are borne on attractively arching and pendulous branches, makes this tree a memorable sight. Beeches are oak relatives with smooth silvery or gray trunks. Sylvester Park, a few blocks to the north (Capitol Way and 7th), has a giant American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), that is more than 70 feet tall and wide.

**2 Bigleaf Maple (NW Native)***Acer macrophyllum* • čuʔac

Near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and eastward on the spacious acres of lawn before you, are five huge bigleaf maples, native at the Capitol, dating from before the turn of the 20th century. Some of their mossy trunks support licorice fern. Producing leaves larger than any other maple, frequently the size of a dinner plate, and sometimes measuring nearly two feet, this tree certainly earns its name! In October the leaves turn golden and drop, revealing brown winged seeds covered with tiny bristles. Washington's tallest bigleaf maple, an eye-straining 158 feet, grows in Mt. Baker National Forest.

**3 Douglas Fir ("moon tree") (NW Native)***Pseudotsuga menziesii* • scəbidac

While the Douglas fir is one of the most common evergreens in Washington, this particular tree has a unique history. During the Apollo moon missions between 1969 and 1972, Douglas fir seedlings were transported to the moon for each of the 50 states. The Washington state 'moon tree' was planted as a seedling on the Capitol Campus at its location on Capitol Way, near Tivoli fountain. It's a very full and beautifully formed tree that has a place of honor on the campus, reminding visitors of the Apollo missions to the moon.

**4 Norway Maple***Acer platanoides*

Scattered across the east lawn area of the Capitol Campus are three Norway maples, most of them conspicuously wide.

Because of its strength and beauty, Norway maple is much planted in American cities. Unlike bigleaf maple, its leaves are not deeply indented, and are proportionately broad. In autumn the leaves can be pure yellow, gold, or even orange. One of two dozen varieties of Norway maple, 'Royal Redleaf' grows on the lawn between the Visitor Center and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. All summer its leaves are reddish-purple.



5 American White Elm*Ulmus americana*

An historic American white elm is on the lawn by 11th Avenue, opposite the General Administration Building parking garage. On July 3, 1775, General George Washington took command of the fledgling Continental Army under an elm at Cambridge, Massachusetts. After Washington was elected first president, the elm became a celebrated attraction.



In 1896, a University of Washington alumnus doing graduate study in Cambridge obtained a rooted cutting of the famous elm, which was sent to Professor Edmund Meany at the University of Washington. This rooted cutting was planted, and from it cuttings were taken. The tree before you was one such cutting, planted February 18, 1932, the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth. To the west is a small elm planted from a 1979 cutting. Washington State lacks native elms.

6 English Oak*Quercus robur*

Towering west of the elm is the nation's largest English oak, an amazingly vigorous tree with an inspiring crown 96 feet tall. Its massive trunk is almost 4 feet thick. This species is famous in England. Its wood was used for everything from common furniture to the Royal Navy's ships. English oak differs from many deciduous oaks because its leaves are comparatively small, not especially lobed, and fade to dull colors in autumn. Its acorns are about the size of large hazelnuts, on long stems. It officially became the largest in the nation when it surpassed an English oak in Rhode Island.

**7 Bush Butternut or White Walnut***Juglans cinerea*

One of the newest trees planted on the west campus is called the Bush Butternut. This tree that produces edible nuts is named after one of Thurston County's early pioneers. George W. Bush led wagon trains of families



from Missouri to settle in the western territories of what would become the states of Oregon and Washington. Along with Michael T. Simmons, who founded the town of Tumwater, George W. Bush staked out a claim to farm 640 acres just south of Tumwater. The original Bush Butternut tree on this farm is over 170 years old and is in declining health. Local historians began to propagate this tree in order to save its genetic purity. The Capitol Campus is proud to have one of these offspring to honor our local history. The tree produced its first nut in 2014.

8 Dawn or Chinese Redwood*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*

Across the lawn beyond a bushy Japanese laceleaf maple are two dawn redwoods. One has a plaque explaining how in 1980 a sequoia tree was planted to commemorate Washington's first woman governor, Gov. Dixy Lee Ray. But that tree died, and as replacements we have these Chinese cousins of the mighty California sequoias.



Metasequoia means "changed sequoia" in reference to its deciduous habit. Like other sequoias or redwoods, this species grows quickly to become very large. Several in Washington are already nearly 100 feet tall. The needles are delicate ferny green in summer, then turn bronzy, pinkish or golden before dropping in fall. Dawn redwood was thought extinct, then was discovered growing in remote China during the 1940s.

9 Ginkgo*Ginkgo biloba*

Westward, in a triangle formed by sidewalks, stands a male ginkgo – a gaunt, striking tree also of ancient, evolutionary lineage. Millions of years ago, both ginkgo and dawn redwood grew in Washington. But continental drift, ice ages, and volcanism changed the face of the earth. Ginkgo’s leaf is weirdly shaped with two lobes, and turns a clear glorious yellow in November. The tree grows slowly but lives for hundreds of years and becomes huge. Female specimens bear orange fruits consisting of an edible nut surrounded by soft, malodorous flesh. A second ginkgo – a female – is on the East Campus, west of the Employment Security Building.

**10 Western Red Cedar (NW Native)***Thuja plicata* • ʔəpayač

At the northeast corner of the Insurance Building is a native cedar. It is actually not a cedar at all but botanically is an arborvitae. Commanding in its great size, it stood here when the buildings were erected in the 1920s. Western red cedar is Earth’s largest arborvitae. Atlas and western red cedars surely don’t look a bit like each other. Yet their wood characteristics caused them both to be called cedars. Its fragrant, lightweight wood is famous for rot-resistance and prized by indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest for its versatility and utility. Its bark was woven into mats and bas-kets, and its hollowed trunks served as dug-out canoes, sometimes more than 70 feet long, capable of carrying many warriors across Puget Sound.

**11 Atlas Cedar***Cedrus atlantica*

Two enormous Atlas Cedars stand to the east of the bronze 1938 Winged Victory Monument. Their branching trunks support a broad crown of limbs over 50 feet wide. These venerable trees – true cedars – are native in the Atlas mountains of northern Africa, and are close cousins to the cedar of Lebanon, but bear shorter, blunter needles, and smaller cones.

**12 Kwanzan Flowering-Cherry***Prunus serrulata* ‘Kwanzan’

Two rows of Kwanzan cherries line Cherry Lane, the street east of the Temple of Justice and the Legislative Building. These trees bear showy masses of cotton-candy pink flowers in April, then put on big cherry leaves, but set no fruit. They’re Japanese flowering cherries, bred for ornament exclusively. Kwanzan is the best known flowering cherry in America. The original flowering cherries were planted in 1932, but many have been lost or replanted due to disease and environmental conditions.



13 Saucer Magnolia*Magnolia x soulangeana*

Saucer magnolia are found in six locations on the Capitol grounds. The nearest is located at the southeast entrance of the Legislative Building. When the springtime blossoms are displayed, all eyes admire their beauty. At that time in March or April, the branches are bare except for the large white and purple flowers. Then the big petals drop and leaves commence to cover the tree. These small trees originated from one of Napoleon's army officers, Chevalier Etienne Soulange-Bodin, who intentionally hybridized two Chinese magnolia species. His creation first flowered in 1826.

**14 Evergreen Magnolia***Magnolia grandiflora*

From the Deep South of this country comes a very eye-catching tree, the evergreen magnolia or bull bay. Bold, glossy leaves of substantial texture, often furnished on their undersides with a warm red-brown fuzz, are the rich background setting for giant white blossoms, sometimes 14 inches wide. Fragrant and arresting, they appear from May through October. Such lush foliage is reward enough; the great flowers are a bonus. You can best see this tree from the Legislative Building's east esplanades, then stroll along the east wall of the Temple of Justice to observe two slightly different specimens.

**15 Tulip Tree (Yellow Poplar)***Liriodendron tulipifera*

Among the largest of all trees on the Capitol Campus are five stout tulip trees by the Temple of Justice and Legislative Building. Native from the Great Lakes to north Florida, this is both an important timber species and a cherished shade tree for its towering size – some are 200 feet tall. Although the June flowers are greenish and inconspicuous, the leaf shape is unforgettable.

After the golden fall color, seeds shaped like narrow paddles gradually drop during winter. Yellow poplar is the general name for this tree used in many places in the eastern United States, but landscape architects and nurseries locally prefer to title it tulip tree.

**16 White Fir (NW Native)***Abies concolor* • Ἰαῖταῖος

The most recently planted tree featured in this brochure is the white fir. Two young trees were planted in 2012 on the north side of the Legislature Building to replace failing blue spruce trees. These white fir trees can grow between 80 and 200 feet in height. Notice the beautiful blue-green color of the needles. Close inspection of the underside of each leaf will reveal two blue-white bands of stomata, which are openings that allow the leaf to exchange gases with the atmosphere. White fir appreciates full sun and well-drained soils. It is becoming more and more popular as a Christmas tree due to its soft needles and excellent needle retention.



17 Red Oak*Quercus rubra*

Many people think of oak trees as being slow growing. This is true for many oak species but red oak is considered to be fast growing. It is also a long-lived tree that can reach ages well past 300 years.



It is tolerant of many soil types and varied conditions, making it a versatile and common shade and park tree. The wood from red oak is also very versatile, being used for flooring, veneer, interior trim, furniture, lumber, railroad ties and fence posts. These particular oaks at the corner of the Legislative Building provide filtered shade for other ornamental plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias and piers.

18 Northern Catalpa*Catalpa speciosa*

A tree not usually seen in South Puget Sound, the northern catalpa, is found just west of the main gate entry to the Governor's mansion. This tree is also known as hardy catalpa, western catalpa, cigar tree and Catawba-tree. It is called cigar tree because its fruit or seed pods resemble a long, slender cigar. The leaves, which are late to emerge in the spring, are shaped like a heart and their large size gives the tree an overall course texture. Trumpet shaped flowers that are white with yellow stripes and purple spots are highly noticeable in early June. The tree is adapted to moist, high pH soils.

**19 Yoshino Flowering-Cherry***Prunus x yedoensis*

Yoshino cherries are among the first Capitol trees to bloom in spring, with pale pink to white, airy flowers by



the millions that fall like snow. After the delicate flowers all drop, leaves come on. Thirty nine Yoshino cherries form a grove south of the Legislative Building. These were donated in 1984 by Mitsuo Mutai, a Japanese newspaper owner from the city of Yoshino, Japan. There is a second small grove northeast of Tivoli fountain by the Isaac Stevens homesite.

20 Douglas Fir (NW Native)*Pseudotsuga menziesii* • *sčəbidac*

This is the species whose domain of greenery led to Washington being called the Evergreen State. It cloaks the hillsides and valleys of millions of square miles in the Pacific Northwest. Colossal dark trunks stand out on the Capitol Campus, for example 5 large ones between the Cherberg and Newhouse buildings. These giant trees are our renowned Douglas firs, which in the great Olympic National Park measure as tall as 326 feet, the thickest trunk almost 15 feet in diameter! Its name commemorates the Scottish plant explorer David Douglas, who first sent seeds of the species to England in 1827.



21 Eastern Flowering Dogwood

Cornus florida

Lovely shrubby trees from eastern North America, these are relatives of our native Pacific dogwood – *Cornus nuttallii*. Four eastern dogwoods are north of the Pritchard Building parking lot. A lone pink-flowered eastern dogwood is in the Visitor Center parking lot. Our native flowers in April, the eastern species follows in May. The two trees



are unlike in form, but you can tell by looking at the blossoms that they're close cousins. In fall, the eastern species usually has brighter, more showy leaf coloration. The inelegant name dogwood is of old English origin and referred to another species that was and is a comparatively dull bush.

