

# SPECIES

## Lilac Bush *Syringa*

One of the best most well-known horticultural shrubs is the lilac bush. This bush produces beautiful: white, purple, lilac or burgundy flower-clusters in April or May. This hardy species is a useful windbreak, screen, or hedge. In the Victorian era, the secret message behind a gift of lilac flowers generally indicated love, symbolizing youth, modesty, and purity.

## Red Maple *Acer rubrum*

Red Maple species have the greatest north to south distribution of any tree on the East Coast, stretching as far north as Newfoundland, Canada and as far south as Florida. Pioneers made ink and dyes from a bark extract. The leaves have three shallow, short-pointed lobes which turn red during autumn.

## Red Oak *Quercus rubra*

This common oak species is an important source of lumber. The acorns of this species are egg-shaped and long, usually reddish-brown in color. They are a favorite of many birds, squirrels, raccoon, and black bear. It is believed this tree has been standing since at least 1880 where it can be seen in a dated photo taken of the Mansion.

## Shagbark Hickory *Carya ovata*

Long, narrow, curved strips of loose bark set this giant apart. The bark can be used to

smoke meats and make a smoky hickory syrup. Nuts appear in fall covered by a tough, thick husk splitting at the base which appears green turning to brown. Nuts are edible raw or can be used in baking.

## Sugar Maple *Acer saccharum*

The favorite of birds, colonists and Native Americans, sugar maples line the path to the Fort Hunter Mansion. These trees are tapped annually for Dauphin County Park & Recreation's Maple Sugar Festival. Observe inch-wide holes around the base of the trunk. These are used to obtain approximately 40 gallons of sap to yield 1 gallon of syrup.

## Sweetgum *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Pioneers used to scrape off a gum-like substance, obtained by peeling back the bark of the tree and removing a resin-like material— to be used as chewing gum. This tree is recognized by its star-shaped aromatic leaves and drooping ball-shaped fruits, composed of several curved points.

## Sweet Cherry *Prunus avium*

Of note for this species of cherry tree is its smooth grayish red bark with lateral concentric scars. This tree is an introduced species with several widely cultivated ornamental varieties. Sweet edible fruit matures in summer that contain an elliptical stone, which is a favorite for wildlife.



## Resources:

Elbert L. Little, Chief Dendrologist. 1980.

The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees. United States: Chanticleer Press, Inc.

Champion Trees of Pennsylvania. PA Big Trees. Aaron Greenberg and Scott Wade [accessed March 2022]. <https://www.pabigtrees.com/>

The Tree Guide 2022. Lincoln, Nebraska: The Arbor Day Foundation. [accessed March 2022]. <https://www.arborday.org/trees/treeguide/index.cfm>

*Built on a bluff overlooking the Susquehanna River, Fort Hunter Mansion and Park has served as a war fort, a hub for frontier commerce, and an exclusive private estate. Now preserved and open to the public, Fort Hunter Mansion and Park invites you to explore Pennsylvania's rich history.*



5300 North Front Street  
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[www.forthunter.org](http://www.forthunter.org)



## Self-Guided TREE WALK

Use this brochure as guide to the labeled trees surrounding Fort Hunter Mansion.

The resources listed are excellent websites and books to help you discover and learn more about trees.



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## American Holly *Ilex opaca*

An evergreen tree with waxy, spiny-pointed leaves. Berries produced on female tree species are enjoyed by mammals, songbirds, grouse, quail and turkeys after the frost settles in for the winter. This tree is a popular ornamental especially utilized during the holiday season.

## American Sycamore *Platanus occidentalis*

One of the largest eastern hardwood species, sycamore trees have showy smooth, whitish, mottled peeling bark. Their leaves are often confused for “over-sized” maple leaves possessing 3-5 shallow pointed lobes. Sycamore trees prefer moist streambanks and flood plains. They are often referred to as “buttonwood” trees in reference to their drooping ball-like fruits. There are three noticeable buttonwoods at Fort Hunter Park– two on the mansion side and one behind the tavern – that are listed in the book, “Penn’s Woods”, and are estimated to be over 300 years old. They are thought to be among the oldest trees in the state. The one right on the edge of Fishing Creek in particular, is noted as a historic tree of Pennsylvania and may well have been noted during the survey ordered by Thomas and John Penn in 1773.

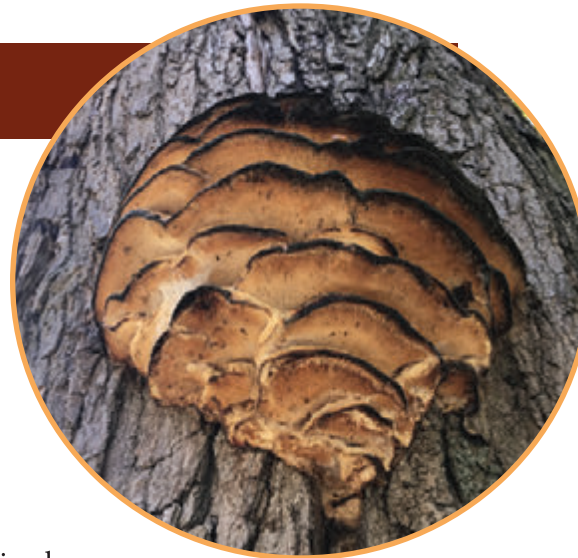
## Black Walnut *Juglans nigra*

A beautiful native hardwood useful particularly in the furniture industry. The nuts are edible and enjoyed by humans,

squirrels, foxes, and woodpeckers. The green husk surrounding the nut can be used to make black dye. The roots, which may extend 50 feet or more from the trunk, exude a natural herbicide known as juglone. This substance is also found in the tree’s leaves and fruit husks. Tomatoes, potatoes, apples, pears, berries, and some landscape plants such as rhododendrons, azaleas, and lilacs may be killed or stunted if grown in close proximity to black walnut roots or within the tree’s drip line (i.e., under the tree’s canopy).

## Eastern Redbud *Cercis canadensis*

A relatively short tree with spreading branches and sweet pink flowers that emerge from the twigs in the spring. The heart-shaped leaves appear after that, followed by the narrow oblong seed pod. A favorite of George Washington, the redbud is referenced in his diary on numerous occasions. Likewise, he spent much time transplanting his own seedlings at Mount Vernon.



## Ginkgo *Ginkgo biloba*

This tree is recognized by its distinct fan-shaped leaves which turn yellow in the autumn. Female trees emit a rancid odor as their berries fall and rot. Male species are purchased more commonly. These trees are resistant to smoke, insect pests/disease, wind, ice, and dust. The seeds and leaves are used medicinally throughout the world. This tree is a living fossil, dating back several million years ago.

## Honeylocust *Gleditsia triacanthos*

Look for long narrow brown spines along the trunk and branches. Also of note are the flat, dark brown, bean-like seed pods. This is a popular shade species which attracts a wide variety of wildlife.

## Kentucky Coffeetree

### *Gymnocladus dioica*

Bipinnately or twice-compound leaves cover the branches, with thick, wide, dark pods which fall in winter. This species is one of the last to leaf out in the spring and one of the first to drop its leaves in the fall. Its name is derived from Kentucky settlers who thought the seed pod resembled coffee beans. Its genus name is Greek for “naked branch.”

## Kwanzan Cherry *Prunus serrulata*

A favorite during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington D.C., the Kwanzan Cherry is the most widely cultivated species of cherry. This species has stunning pink double flowers in the spring and no fruit. It derives its name from a mountain in Japan and was introduced to the U.S. in 1903. It is also native to China and Korea. This tree can also be used as a bonsai tree.

## Look for labeled tree species on the Mansion grounds

