



# A YEAR IN REVIEW

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Madison Square Park

Arbor Month Report 2025

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# A YEAR IN REVIEW

Tree conservation is a long-term endeavor. While tree planting is important, ensuring that established trees are maintained during times of uncertainty will provide benefits long into the future. 2024 posed many climate-related challenges for trees. Nationwide, temperatures were 2 - 4 degrees higher on average. The New York City area started showing signs of a drought as early as May, and the fall saw record-breaking droughts and warm temperatures. The horticulture staff at Madison Square Park had to take proactive action by increasing park irrigation and increasing the amount of time spent caring for vulnerable sidewalk trees.

With this additional care, we are pleased to report that Madison Square Park had no tree deaths in 2024, and trees are on schedule to come out of dormancy on time.

Madison Square Park is home to several endangered American elm trees. Every few years, these vulnerable trees need to be treated with preventative fungicide to protect them against Dutch Elm Disease. This last summer, the elms received another round of treatments, ensuring their protection for years to come.

CHANGES TO THE TREES IN 2024:	
TREES PRUNED:	194
TREES PLANTED:	1
TREES REMOVED:	0
ELMS PROTECTED AGAINST DUTCH ELM DISEASE:	11



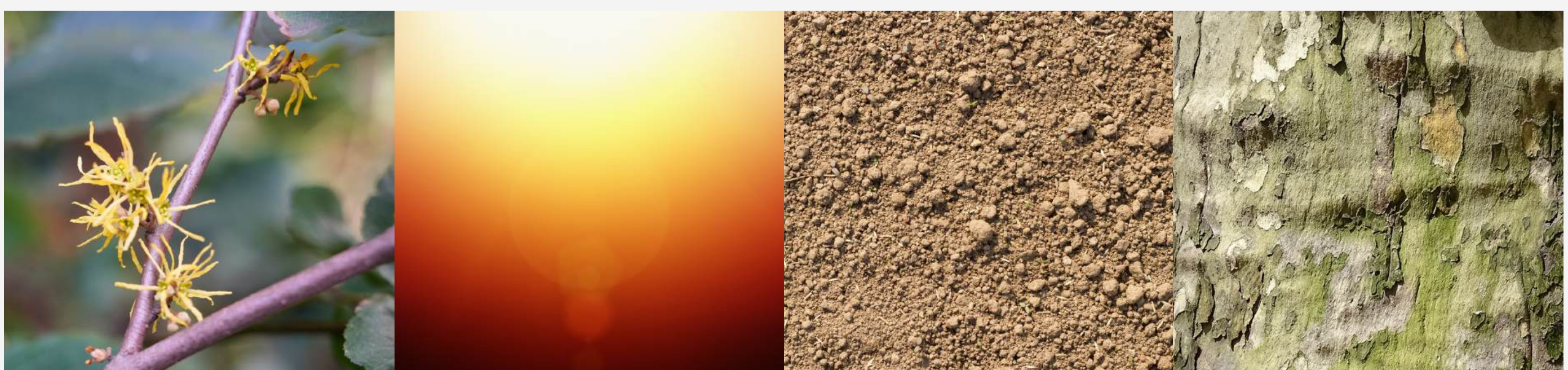




# STATE OF THE TREES 2025

Droughts can significantly impact trees, leading to increased vulnerability to pests and diseases and causing reduced growth and die back. As spring unfurls, the tree canopy is receiving extra care and attention to help mitigate any damage caused by the drought. Tree risk assessments are being conducted on trees that have the potential for hazard. Additional harnessing will be added to some of our older trees this year—helping to provide more structural support in areas affected by wind.

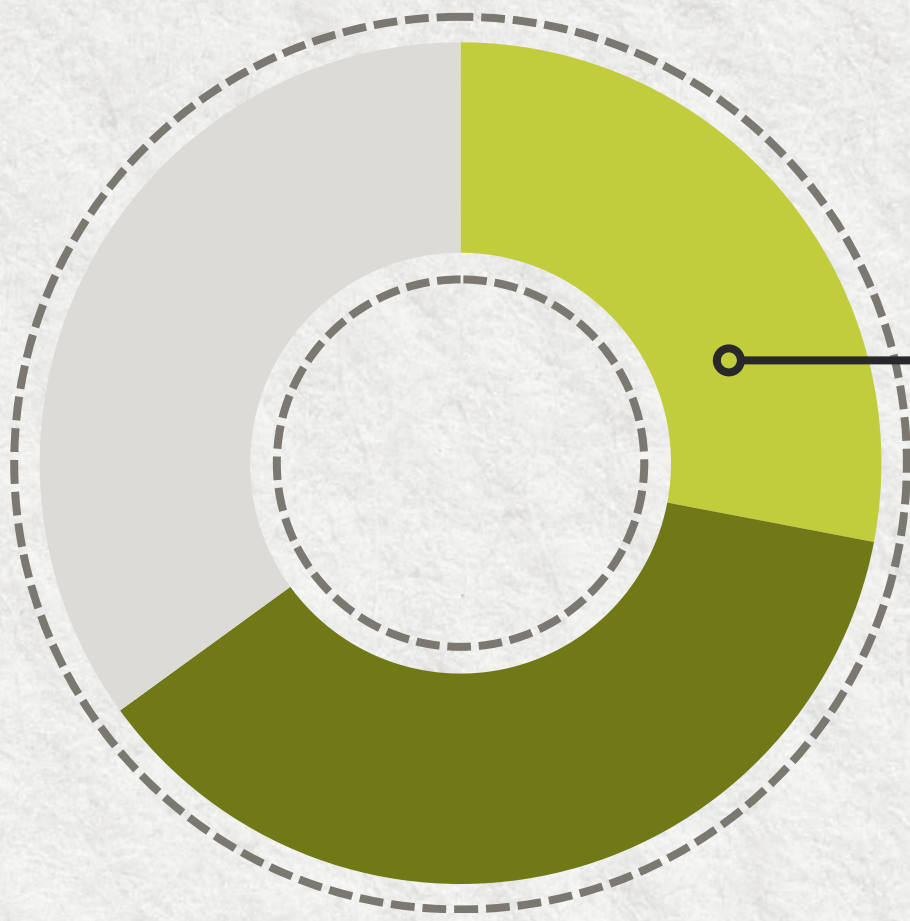
In 2024, our team took note of the increasingly unpredictable climate conditions we see in our region and the threats they pose to our tree canopy. [Click here to read](#) the complete blog post on these measurable and concerning trends.





# INTERESTING FACTS

37% of the trees in Madison Square Park are native to North America, with 28% local to New York State.



PERCENTAGE OF TREES LESS THAN 6 INCHES IN DIAMETER (YOUNG TREES): 15.5%





# MEET THE TREES

## ***Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'**

This Arbor Day, we are highlighting the cherry blossom tree, *Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'. Understandably, these trees draw in thousands of patrons to the park each year to bask in their beauty. Small, delicate pink flowers crowd the canopy, while pink petals drift to the ground, creating the most idyllic scenery midtown Manhattan has ever seen.

Only growing up to 25 feet, these ornamental cherries are classified as a small tree that enjoy full sun and a lot of space to spread their elegant upward or downward-curving branches. The flowers are fully double, having up to 24 - 28 petals per flower, creating their showstopping spring display. They prefer loamy soil and can be susceptible to a myriad of diseases and pests, so they are not suited for the novice gardener, and for this reason, they can be short-lived.





**KWANZAN CHERRY**  
***PRUNUS SERRULATA***  
FAMILY: ROSACEAE  
ORIGIN: CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA  
33



This winter, the horticulture team worked to prune off diseased branches from these cherries, specifically on Cherry Lawn. If these limbs are left to the tree to deal with, the fungus either spreads by wind or water distribution, or the disease weakens the branch and has the potential to fall and damage the surrounding branches or the tree itself. With a lifespan of 25 - 30 years, the horticulture team monitors trees for rejuvenating pruning: lightening the canopy or thinning to encourage new growth. This process of caring for older trees is called retrenchment and is vital to preserving historic and valuable trees in Madison Square Park.

These plants are sterile, so they do not produce fruit. Though they are in the same plant family (Rosaceae) and genus (Prunus), the cherry species that we cultivate for eating. There are several other members of the genus living in the park, some of which bear fruit and are also ornamental.







This tree is named after the Kanzan mountains in Japan, where it is native. The history of these trees date back to the Edo period in Japan (1603-1868), a time in which many of the cultivars we still use today were established. This specific cultivar is reported to have been a clone, propagated asexually from a single ancestor, using rooted cuttings. In 1912, the Japanese government gifted the United States this cultivar of cherry tree as a symbol of friendship. The trees were sited for the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., kick-starting the tree's nationwide popularity.

Luckily, there's no need to go to Washington DC to see these beauties bloom, with seven specimens spread out throughout the park. The specimen located next to the Eternal Light Monument also features a traditional Japanese prop. The prop, a cedar post, helps provide support to this mature tree, helping to preserve it for generations to come.



# THE GREAT TREES OF NEW YORK CITY

## English elm (*Ulmus procera*)

In 2023, we asked our community to help nominate this beautiful English elm (*Ulmus procera*) in Madison Square Park as part of the most recent Great Tree Search in New York City.

In this second interaction of The Great Tree Search, New Yorkers across the city were invited to nominate the exceptional trees that make up our urban forest.







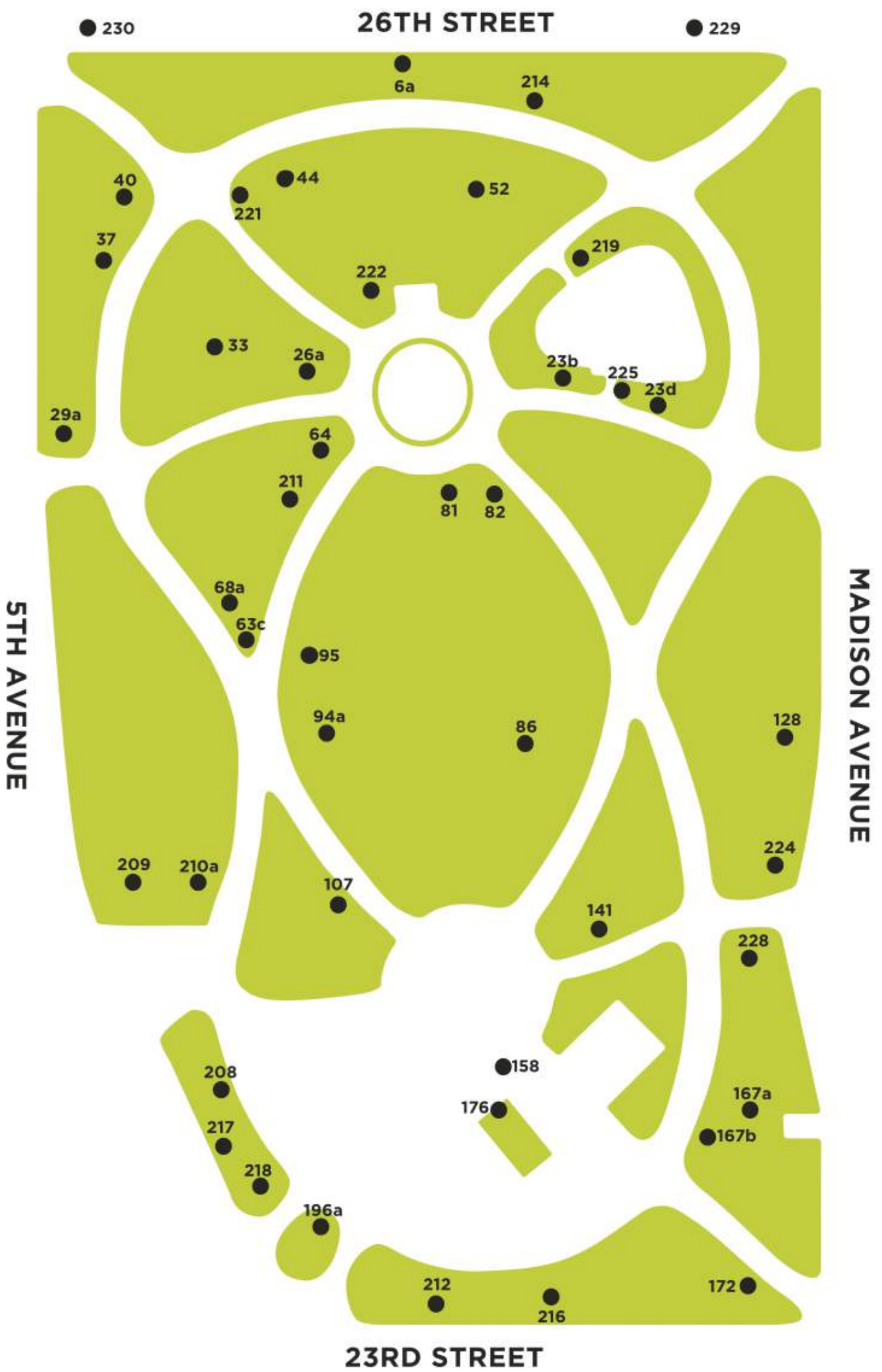
Thanks to your support, this glorious tree on the Farragut Lawn (which is over 200 years old) was designated as one of the selections this past year, recognizing its historic, botanical, and cultural significance. While all 300 plus of our park trees are special, it's wonderful that this veteran tree has been included on such a prestigious list.

To view all the Great Trees of New York, visit the [NYC Parks website here](#).



# MADISON SQUARE PARK IS AN ARBORETUM

#	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME
6A	Japanese katsura	<i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>
23B	Japanese snowbell	<i>Styrax japonicus</i>
23D	Cornelian cherry	<i>Cornus mas</i>
26A	Persian ironwood	<i>Parrotia persica</i>
29A	Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'Floating Clouds'
33	Kwanzan cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Kwanzan'
37	Swamp white oak	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>
40	Wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>
44	Pagoda tree	<i>Styphnolobium japonicum</i>
52	English elm	<i>Ulmus procera</i>
63C	Carolina silverbell	<i>Halesia carolina</i> 'UConn Wedding Bells'
64	Pin oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i>
68A	Red buckeye	<i>Aesculus pavia</i>
81	English elm	<i>Ulmus procera</i>
82	Horse chestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>
86	Ginkgo	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>
94A	Yellowwood	<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>
95	Chinese elm	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>
107	London plane	<i>Platanus</i> × <i>acerifolia</i>
128	Red oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>
141	Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>
158	Littleleaf linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i>
167A	Dove tree	<i>Davidia involucrata</i> 'Sonoma'
167B	Japanese apricot	<i>Prunus mume</i> 'Peggy Clarke'
172	Downy hawthorn	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>
176	Washington hawthorn	<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>
196A	Kousa dogwood	<i>Cornus kousa</i>
208	Weeping tupelo	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> 'Autumn Cascade'
209	Sweet gum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> 'Slender Silhouette'
210A	Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'JN16'
211	Chinese fringe tree	<i>Chionanthus retusus</i> 'Tokyo Tower'
212	Musclewood	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> 'J.N. Globe'
214	Southern magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>
216	Chinese ironwood	<i>Parrotia subaequalis</i>
217	Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier</i> × <i>grandiflora</i> 'Autumn Brilliance'
218	Chinese fringe tree	<i>Chionanthus retusus</i> 'China Snow'
219	Fringe tree	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>
221	American basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i> 'McKSentry'
222	Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'PNI 0268'
224	Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'NC2016-2'
225	Crabapple	<i>Malus</i> 'Donald Wyman'
228	Black locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> 'Purple Robe'
229	Musclewood	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>
230	Silver linden	<i>Tilia tomentosa</i> 'PNI 6051'







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