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Fairfax Tree City Bike Ride

Take a ride around Fairfax City to view significant trees in the community.

1 Suggested Start and End:
Old Town Square (10413 North St)



To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-385-7810, TTY 711.

Fairfax Tree City Bike Ride

Significant Trees

1. American elm (*Ulmus americana*) – Old Town Square

In Old Town Square a large American elm stands tall above the plaza. Many American elms were devastated by Dutch elm disease in the 1920s, and today the species is considered endangered globally by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). American elms are popular street trees – they’re tolerant of urban conditions, grow fast, and have beautiful open canopies with a round shape that flattens at the top. In the 1930s, a cloned Dutch-elm resistant variety of American elm called the ‘Jefferson’ was planted along the National Mall in Washington, D.C. and is today a cultivar used in plantings here in the city – such as new trees on Armstrong St at City Hall – and elsewhere.

2. White oaks (*Quercus alba*) – Historic Blenheim

Along the fenceline facing Blenheim Blvd, you’ll find three fenced two-year saplings that were installed last fall to succeed the red oak, located south of the historic house, which is reaching the end of its life. White oaks, and oaks in general, are a critical keystone species. Over 900 species of Lepidoptera—the genus that includes moths and butterflies—use oaks for at least one part of their life cycle. These species then support other wildlife like our songbirds. What makes these white oaks particularly special is that they are the progeny of the Brookwood oak (the next stop), which at one point would’ve been located on the same farm property owned by the Willcoxon family in the mid-1800s. Acorns were collected from the street under the historic tree and grown in small containers, then transferred to the site at about 2 feet tall.

3. White oak (*Quercus alba*) – Brookwood Dr

In 1987, this immense Brookwood white oak tree was designated as a “significant tree” by the National Arborist Association and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), noting the tree had been alive as early as 1787 – the year the U.S. Constitution was signed. It witnessed the fire that destroyed the farmhouse on Willcoxon Farm (now modern-day Historic Blenheim), the occupation of Fairfax by Union forces in 1862, and the transformation of the area from dairy farms to suburban neighborhoods in the 1950s. In 1988, the Fairfax City Comprehensive Plan referenced the Brookwood Oak along with three other noteworthy trees and noted its age as 245, which would make it at 283 years old today. Its canopy stretches over 100 feet across.

4. Daniels Run Park

Daniels Run Park is a great stop to cool down under the forest’s canopy and see what the woods have to offer. At 48 acres, Daniels Run Park is the largest wooded park in Fairfax City. Pause now and then as you ride through the park to admire its large oaks, tulip trees, beeches, and hickories. In the understory, you may find flowering native shrubs and small American chestnuts – look for longer than wide serrated leaves. These trees are not expected to reach old age, but they remind us of a past world when these majestic giants made up about 50% of most eastern hardwood forests.

5. White oak (*Quercus alba*) – Farrcroft

On Farr Oak Circle, you’ll come across a large white oak, which is well over 100 years old. In 1937, its canopy stretched 50 feet wide, and the tree was surrounded by fields, trees, and unpaved roads – many years before the development of Farrcroft. In 2017, it was measured 221 inches around in diameter, 117 feet tall, and 151 feet across its canopy.

6. American chestnuts (*Castanea dentata*) - George Mason University’s Forager’s Forest

On GMU's Fairfax campus, accessible by trail near the stream between Aquia Creek Lane and Patriot’s Circle on Mason’s Fairfax Campus, visit the groves of the Forager Forest and look for the five hybridized American chestnut trees planted in 2024 as part of the university’s partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation. The Forager Forest is a food forest and rewilding experiment that offers edible native plants, featuring species such as wild strawberries, blueberries, American hazelnuts, and American persimmons. American chestnuts became functionally extinct due to a blight that devastated its population in the early 1900s, so the installation of American chestnuts is exciting for the prospect of being able to forage chestnuts when the trees mature.

7. Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) – Eleven Oaks

Just north of George Mason University on Eleven Oaks Street, witness a large Northern red oak. This tree is visible from aerial imagery from the year 1960, at that time already a mature tree with a 20-foot-wide canopy. Most of the development around the tree is relatively new – George Mason Blvd was constructed around the year 2009 and housing went in starting 2015. Today, the canopy stretches some 80 feet across and is a statement in the neighborhood.