About the Scott Arboretum

The Scott Arboretum is a green oasis uniquely situated on the Swarthmore College campus. Over 300 acres create the College landscape and provide a display of the best ornamental plants recommended for Delaware Valley gardens.

Established in 1929 as a living memorial to Arthur Hoyt Scott, Class of 1895, through a gift from his family, the Arboretum continues to thrive today. There are over 4,000 different kinds of plants grown on the campus, selected for their outstanding ornamental qualities, ease of maintenance, and resistance to disease. Major plant collections include: flowering cherries, crabapples, hollies, lilacs, magnolias, tree peonies, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, conifers, vines, summer flowering shrubs, viburnums, and witchhazels.

Maps and specialized brochures on plants growing on the campus are available at the Arboretum office, which also houses a horticultural reference library. The Arboretum is open from dawn to dusk year-round. Admission is free.

The Arboretum is supported in part by the Associates of the Scott Arboretum, a membership group. Join today and enjoy an array of fun and educational events year-round. For additional information, call 610-328-8025, Monday through Friday, 8:30 to noon and 1:00 to 4:30.


Decumaria barbara
(wood vamp) This self-clinging vine will climb up to 30’. The lustrous, dark green foliage transforms to a soft buttery color as fall arrives. The sweetly fragrant, 1/4” white flowers, similar to the infertile flowers of hydrangeas, appear from June through July when little else is blooming.

Gelsemium sempervirens
‘Margarita’ (Carolina jessamine) A semi-evergreen vine with dark green foliage and golden yellow flowers. Easy to grow and works well growing vertically or as a ground or bank cover.

Holboellia coriacea
(sausage vine) This fast-growing vine reaches heights of 22’. Its dark green, leathery evergreen leaves are distinctively veined. Six-inch clusters of white female flowers emerge at the bases of the leaves. Purple male flowers emerge at the same time in separate clusters.

Lonicera reticulata ‘Kintzley’s Ghost’ (grape honeysuckle) A very unique honeysuckle, this vine produces masses of small yellow flowers surrounded by saucer-shaped silvery-white bracts. The bracts persist through fall, offering extended seasonal interest. Grows 8’-12’.

Wisteria macrostachys (Kentucky wisteria) With similar characteristics to American wisteria (W. frutescens), this wisteria grows to 15’-20’ and produces racemes of lilac purple flowers in May to early June.
About the Cosby Courtyard

The Cosby Courtyard was funded by and named for Isabelle Bennett Cosby ’28. It stands on the site of the old Parrish Annex. This faux ruin garden uses pillars and walls to represent the footprint of the former building for a unique historical reference. The granite inlay in the flagstone outlines the old building’s foundation. For an aerial view of the garden, look through the 3rd floor windows of Kohlberg Hall.

Located on the central axis of the campus, this highly visible garden provides a relaxing meeting space. Pillars and some of the walls provide places for vines to scramble, providing enclosure. “Windows” frame various views of the garden.

This plant connoisseur’s garden invites visitors to enjoy an eclectic group of plants ranging from vines to shrubs and trees to a wide array of perennials. Plants with purple or gold foliage provide a long season of interest. In some areas, repetitive masses of perennials help draw the garden together.

The micro-climate of the courtyard is warmer than surrounding areas. The embracing walls of the building hold in the heat, which also radiates off the flagstone walkways. Many plants used in the garden were chosen for heat tolerance. The slightly warmer temperatures also allow some tender plants to survive the cold winters.

Containers are an attraction from May to October; fewer containers are planted for winter interest.

This symbol indicates a plant that has received the Gold Medal Plant Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, which recognizes trees, shrubs, and woody vines of outstanding merit based on disease and pest resistance, ease of growing, and beauty in many seasons.

Shrubs & Trees

**Chimonanthus praecox ‘Luteus’** (fragrant wintersweet) This small-statured (10’-15’ tall and wide) deciduous tree produces wonderfully fragrant bright yellow flowers, which bloom January through February.

**Cercidiphyllum japonicum** (katsura tree) This tree is deciduous with a pyramidal habit, growing to 70’ tall. Heart-shaped leaves emerge reddish-purple and change to blue-green for the summer. The autumn brings a spectacular display of bright yellow to scarlet fall color. As the foliage changes color, the tree emits a curious aroma that gives it another common name: the cotton candy tree.

**Chionanthus retusus ‘Serrulatus’** (Chinese fringe tree) A small (20’ tall) tree that provides year-round interest. During the spring, fragrant white flowers attract bees, birds, and butterflies; the summery green foliage turns yellow in fall. This multi-trunked tree has deeply ridged and furrowed bark for subtle beauty during winter months.

**Edgeworthia chrysantha** (edgeworthia) Fragrant yellow blooms open in late winter, adding color to its attractive structure. The bluish-green foliage exhibits a silvery undertone and turns a rich shade of yellow in the fall. Ultimately, this deciduous shrub reaches 7’ tall and 12’ wide.

**Enkianthus perulatus ‘J.L. Pennock’** (white enkianthus) This shrub has a dainty rounded habit with bright green leaves and small, urn-shaped flowers that open with or before the leaves appear in May. Flowers are slightly ill-scented; leaves have exceptional purple-red fall color. Grows to 6’ high and wide.

**Loropetalum chinense var. rubrum Razzleberri®** (Chinese fringe flower) Copper-burgundy young foliage matures to olive-green by late summer. Subtle but stunningly rich violet-pink flowers appear intermittently throughout the year, resembling the blooms of its close relative, the witchhazel. This connoisseur plant needs a protected area, as it is marginally hardy in our climate (zone 7). Grows 8’ high and wide when mature.

**Vines**

Vines are versatile garden plants, providing a vertical element and a sense of enclosure. In the Cosby Courtyard, vines are grown on pillars and walls; eyebolts or steel nails and wire provide support. Here are some notable examples:

**Campsis grandiflora ‘Morning Calm’** (Chinese trumpet creeper) A deciduous woody vine, C. grandiflora “Morning Calm” climbs using adhesive, aerial rootlets and can grow 20’-25’ tall. Its 3” long flowers appear on new wood July through August and are a beautiful peach-apricot color with yellow throats and pinkish veins. It is less aggressive than the native American Campsis radicans.

**Viburnum x bodnantense ‘Charles Lamont’** (viburnum) Bright pink flowers with a sweet fragrance enliven the garden at winter’s end. It is one of the earliest flowering viburnums, with remarkable frost-resistant blooms. When young, the habit is upright; over time the shrub grows to 10’ tall and develops gracefully arching stems.

**Clematis viticella** (Italian clematis) This deciduous woody vine displays nodding, red to purple blooms from summer to autumn. Like other clematis, C. viticella climbs by twisting its petioles (leaf stems) around a support, growing up to 30’. Both of the cultivars listed below are resistant to clematis wilt.

‘Etoile Violette’ has 3” violet-purple flowers from July-August

‘Mme. Julia Correvon’ Displays wine-red blooms in June (cover photo)