

Leaf Images for the Trees of Masters Park and surroundings in Haw Creek Valley

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◀ Black Haw: This small, native tree is found in Haw Creek Valley, and it gives the area its name. You can find this viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*) growing in many parts of the valley (although not in abundance), especially along Haw Creek and its tributaries. Black Haw has simple, deciduous, finely toothed leaves. Its flower clusters are most attractive, and its bluish-black berries have a pleasant taste that birds and other wildlife enjoy.

▶ Eastern Red Cedar: This tree is actually a juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*), and not a cedar! Its rounded, appressed, and overlapping, scale-like leaves are evergreen, like **most conifers**. It's a medium-sized tree that produces blue, berry-like cones. There are only a few of these trees along the trail to the overlock rock. Its wood has been, and is still, used in the manufacture of pencils.



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► Eastern White Pine: This can be a tall tree – attaining heights in excess of 120 feet; evergreen needles are 5 to a bundle & up to 5 inches long. When Masters Park was clear-cut in the early 1900s, it was re-planted with Eastern White Pines for future timber harvests. So, there are still many of these trees in the lower section of the park.



◄ Virginia Pine: This tree is also known as Scrub Pine and Spruce Pine; evergreen needles are 2 to a bundle, twisted, & 1-to-3 inches long; it can attain heights up to 60 feet.

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► Shortleaf Pine: This large, majestic-looking tree has needles mostly in bundles of two, but also in threes on the same tree. The needles are 2.7-to-4.5 inches in length. This pine prefers dry soils and can reach heights of 100 feet.



◄ Eastern or Canada Hemlock: This beautiful conifer is not common in the park due to devastation by a pest, the Hemlock woolly adelgid. Since first regionally detected in 1995, this aphid-like insect, introduced from Asia, has decimated the Eastern Hemlock population here in the Southern Blue Ridge.

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◀ Sassafras: This is a small tree – rarely exceeding 30 feet; simple, alternate, deciduous leaves come in 3 different shapes; all parts are spicy-aromatic. Before being banned by the FDA as carcinogenic in 1976, Sassafras was used as a source for root beer.

▶ Tuliptree: This can be a very tall tree – attaining heights in excess of 100 feet; it has simple, alternate, deciduous leaves that can be up to 8 inches long and wide. It produces beautiful, large tulip-like blossoms – hence its name. **Tuliptree is sometimes referred to as a “Tulip-Poplar” or “Yellow Poplar”, but it is not related in any way to Poplars; it’s in the Magnolia Family.**



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◀ Sourwood: Alternate deciduous leaves; finely toothed margins; 4-to-7 inches long. Chew the edge of a leaf to experience the sour, sorrel-like taste that gives the tree its name. The sweet nectar from its numerous clusters of small white, urn-shaped blossoms is the source of the tasty and popular Sourwood honey. It can attain heights up to 60 feet.

▶ Persimmon: Alternate, deciduous leaves with smooth margins and pointed tips; 2½-to-6 inches long; mature female trees produce small (under 2 inches in diameter) native, sweet persimmons in the early fall. It can attain heights up to 80 feet.



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◀ American Beech: Alternate deciduous leaves with wavy, short, toothed margins and pointed tips; 3-to-6 inches long; the leaves, although brown then, persist on the branches well into winter; slender buds are brown and sharp-pointed; it produces **small “beechnuts” with their bristly husks**. Its bark is typically smooth and gray in color. Although the specimens in the park are small, the American Beech can reach heights in excess of 60 feet.

▶ American Chestnut: Very few large specimens exist anywhere today, due to the chestnut blight. The few trees that are found in the park are very small – less than 6 feet tall! Alternate, deciduous leaves with wavy, bristle-tipped, toothed margins; 5-to-9 inches long; none of the few trees in the park reach the maturity needed to produce “chestnuts”.



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◀ American Holly: Male and female flowers are on separate trees; so only the female trees produce the bright red diagnostic berries that provide abundant food for birds during the winter. Its sharp, evergreen leaf teeth are also quite diagnostic and uncomfortable to the touch. Although American Hollies can grow to 50 feet tall, most of the those in the park are small.

▶ Mountain Holly or Mountain Winterberry: This is a native deciduous large shrub to small tree. Its berries mature to a bright red in late fall. Its alternate leaves have finely toothed margins, with the undersides paler in color.



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◀ Red Maple: This common maple has opposite leaves (like all maples) with 3-to-5 toothed lobes. Its leaf twigs are frequently dark red, and it is a medium-sized to large tree. The small to large understory shrub, Maple-leaf Viburnum (also found in the park), has oppositely arranged maple-like leaves, and it is often confused with Red Maple. Viburnum seeds are berries, and maple seeds are winged samaras.

▶ Striped Maple: This small tree is also known as “Moosewood”. The deciduous leaves are opposite, with mostly 3 pointed lobes that have finely to sharply toothed margins. The obvious striping on its narrow tree trunk gives this maple its name. Its greenish-yellow flowers, hanging like tassels, are a beautiful sight in spring.



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◀ Norway Maple: This non-native maple can become a large shade tree, especially if planted away from other competing trees. It has opposite, deciduous leaves that have 5 lobes. It is often confused with the native Red Maple. Norway Maple is unique among other local maples, because its leaf stalks, when snapped from the branch, will exude a milky sap. Its leaves turn a bright yellow in the fall.

▶ Eastern Redbud: This small deciduous tree dazzles us with a huge spray of pink in the spring, when it is draped in its flowers just prior to the eruption of its new leaves. Those leaves are broadly heart-shaped with pointed tips and untoothed margins. Redbud is a Pea Family member, as its late summer and fall seed (pea) pods will reveal.



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◀ White Oak: This is one of the easiest of the oaks to identify. Its leaves have pronounced lobes with rounded tips, and its bark, particularly on the upper trunk and branches, is a loose, shaggy, scaly, light gray color. This is one of 5 different oak tree species in the park. Oaks are one of the most important “mast” trees, and its acorns are an important food source for wildlife. This White Oak can be a large tree, and it is, arguably, the most spectacular of the oaks in our region.

▶ Chestnut Oak: This oak tree is the most common of the 5 different oaks in the park and along the trail to the Haw Creek overlook rock. Its name derives from the fact that its leaves somewhat resemble those of the American Chestnut (now for the most part extinct). A key distinction is that the Chestnut Oak has shallow, rounded lobes, while the American Chestnut has shallow, pointed lobes. This tree can attain heights of 80 feet.



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◀ Black Oak: The local black and red oaks (including the scarlet oak) have lobed leaves that are toothed (not rounded). The Black Oak leaves have typically 5-to-9 toothed lobes, and a mature tree can reach 80 feet tall.

▶ Red Oak: More specifically, the red oak in our area is called Northern Red Oak. Its leaves have typically 7-to-11 toothed lobes, and a mature tree can reach 90 feet tall.



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◀ Scarlet Oak: This is a beautiful tree that can reach heights of 80 feet. Its leaves have 7 (rarely 9) deeply divided lobes (at least halfway to the yellow midvein) that are distinctly toothed.

▶ Witch-hazel: This is a very small tree or shrub with alternate, deciduous leaves that are 3-to-6 inches long. It is a common plant of the forest understory. Its yellow, spidery-petaled flowers bloom in autumn (after the leaves drop) and can persist into winter. They have a spicy fragrance. Witch hazel has a long history of medicinal use because of its anti-inflammatory and astringent properties.



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◀ Hazel Alder: This small tree to large shrub is found along Maple Drive near the park trailhead. Like most alders, it prefers moist soils, that the drainage ditch along the road provides. It can grow 10-to-20 feet tall and often forms dense thickets. Its **small woody cones** appear in the fall and persist into winter. Hazel Alder is also known as



Smooth Alder.

▶ Black Tupelo or Blackgum: This medium-sized tree has alternate, simple, deciduous leaves that are 2-to-5 inches long with a blunt or pointed tip and with untoothed margins (rarely a few teeth). Those leaves produce a brilliant display of color in autumn. This tree can be found in the park, but not in abundance. Male and female flowers are found separately on the same tree, and those tiny blossoms produce a rich nectar that attracts bees. And, yes, that nectar is a source of a most tasty, sweet, and sought-after “Tupelo honey” – ask Van Morrison!



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◀ Serviceberry: This particular species of Serviceberry is a small tree (or more often a medium to large shrub) that has simple, alternate, deciduous leaves that are coarsely toothed and somewhat rounded to blunt at the apex. **It's called "Roundleaf Serviceberry"**, and it is rare in our region, preferring dry, rocky outcrops like the Haw Creek valley overlook rock, off the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. It can be found in abundance at the overlook rock. Bears and other wildlife are particularly fond of its sweet, tasty, dark purple berries.

▶ Fringetree: This large shrub to small tree has simple, opposite (or subopposite), deciduous leaves that have smooth margins. Its beautiful spray of white, lace-like flowers often blankets the tree in mid-spring. It can be found in abundance at the Haw Creek valley overlook rock, off the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.



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◀ Flowering Dogwood: This native dogwood is a small tree with a beautiful display of white blossoms in the early spring. Its leaves are arranged oppositely in pairs that are clustered toward the ends of the small branchlets. The expression “dogwood winter” refers to a cold snap in the spring, that occurs after the dogwood trees have blossomed.

▶ White Ash: This can be a large tree that has compound leaves with 5-to-9 leaflets; those compound leaves are arranged oppositely along the stem. The leaflets are dark green above and whitish to very pale beneath. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an insect (a green jewel beetle from Asia), was first detected in the United States in 2002. This pest is particularly fond of the native ash trees, including this white ash. As their name suggests, the EAB bores into **the tree’s bark, lays** its eggs, and their larvae feed on the tree. An infested ash tree typically dies within 4 years.



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◀ Mockernut Hickory: This is one of two hickories found in the park. The Mockernut Hickory can be a large tree that has compound leaves with 7-to-9 leaflets; those compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. The leaflets are finely to coarsely toothed. The twigs and undersides of the leaflets are covered with tufts of wooly hair. Hickory nuts are one of the most important food sources for wildlife.

▶ Pignut Hickory: This is one of two hickories found in the park. The Pignut Hickory is a medium-sized tree that has compound leaves with 5-to-7 leaflets; those compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. The leaflets are finely toothed. The twigs and undersides of the leaflets are mostly glabrous that is, not covered with tufts of wooly hair, like the Mockernut Hickory. Hickory nuts are one of the most important food sources for wildlife.



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◀ Black Walnut: This tree can be quite large. It has leaves with 15-to-23 leaflets; those compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. The leaflets are finely toothed, dark yellowish-green and glabrous above, pale green and hairy beneath. Black Walnut is “allelopathic”, suppressing the growth of many other plant species in its surroundings by releasing a chemical called “juglone”. Of course, it produces many namesake walnuts in the late summer to early fall.

▶ Black Locust: This is a medium to tall tree. It has leaves with 7-to-19 leaflets; those compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. The leaflets have smooth margins. The twigs contain some stout, thorn-like spines, typically arranged in pairs. Black Locust produces a strong, dense wood, that is resistant to rot. Its seeds look very pea-like because it is a member of the Legume (Pea) plant family.



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◀ Weeping Cherry: This is a striking, deciduous, ornamental (non-native) tree that has become somewhat invasive. Despite that, this small to medium sized tree displays a cascade of attractive, pale pink blossoms in early spring before its leaves emerge. Yes, its supple branches do appear to weep, much like a weeping willow.

Its simple, alternate leaves have fine toothed margins. Weeping Cherry produces very small “cherries” that taste sour. You can find specimens of this tree along Maple Drive as you approach the park trailhead.

▶ Black Cherry: This is the largest native cherry, and it can attain heights in excess of 80 feet. Mature trees display a blackish, scaly bark. Its deciduous leaves are simple and alternate, with finely toothed margins. Its small white flowers are arranged in clusters that are quite striking in spring. If cut or broken, Black Cherry leaf twigs produce a strong, unique odor of bitter almonds, that is quite diagnostic. This tree produces small, dark purple-black cherries that are, for the most part, well above human reach. Don't worry, its fruit is often disagreeable to taste, and best left for the birds.



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◀ Black Birch: This tree is also referred to as “Cherry Birch” or “Sweet Birch”. It’s the only birch that grows in the park. Its dark bark on mature trees resembles cherry bark – hence the common name “Cherry Birch”. Scratch a small leaf branch and enjoy the diagnostic, sweet wintergreen fragrance that gives it the name “Sweet Birch”. Its twigs, roots, and sap are the traditional source for “birch beer”. Black Birch’s simple, alternate leaves have sharply and doubly toothed margins. Most of these trees in the park are rather small.

▶ Southern Catalpa: Although this is a native tree to the southeast United States near the Gulf coast, it is planted primarily as an ornamental tree in our area. This is a small to medium sized tree that reaches a mature height of 35-to-45 feet. It has heart-shaped leaves that have a short point at the apex. Those leaves have smooth margins. It has attractive, somewhat tubular white flowers with yellow and purple markings, that produce slender seed pods that are from 6-to-15 inches long. You can find a specimen of this tree along Maple Drive as you approach the park trailhead.



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◀ Black Willow: This is one of 2 willow tree species found along Maple Drive as you approach the park trailhead. This large bush to small tree is a native in our area. It has alternate, finely-toothed leaves that are lance-shaped with a long-pointed tip that is often slightly curved. Like most willows, it prefers wet drainage areas.

▶ Gray Willow: This is one of 2 willow tree species found along Maple Drive as you approach the park trailhead. This large bush to small tree is not native in our area. It has alternate, finely-toothed to entire leaf margins. The leaves themselves are small – from 1-to-4 inches long; a dull green somewhat hairy upper surface with a lighter grayish lower surface that is densely covered with very short hairs. Like most willows, it prefers wet drainage areas.



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◀ Fraser Magnolia: Like all native magnolias here in the mountains, Fraser Magnolia has deciduous, alternate, simple leaves that have a blunt tip and smooth margins. Its leaves are 8-to-18 inches long. Notice the two prominent small lobes at the base of the leaf blade that give it one of its other names – “Earleaf Magnolia”. It produces some showy, 6-to-9 inch wide, fragrant, creamy white flowers in spring. Because it is only found natively in the Southern Appalachians, it is commonly referred to as “Mountain Magnolia”.