

# MEET THE OAKS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

*A Natural History Walk Along Annapolis Street*

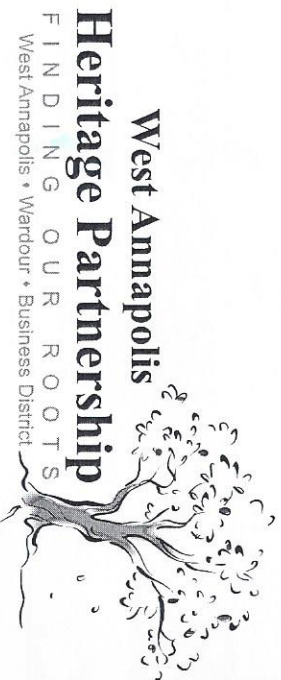
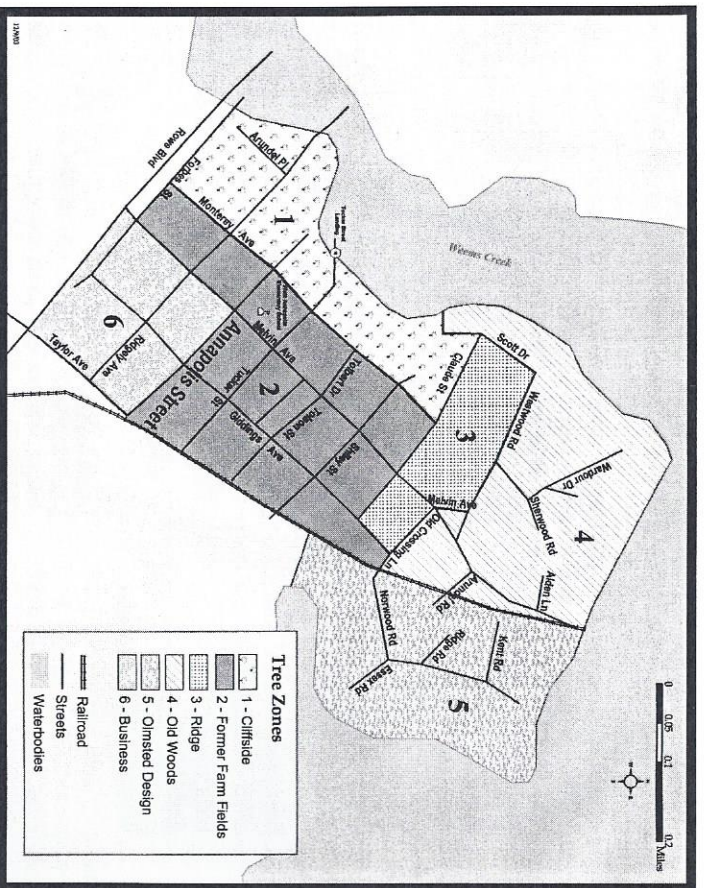
*Annapolis, Maryland*

*By Virginia Vroblecky*

Trees teach us about where we live, if we listen, use our observation skills and curiosity. Some of the trees we will encounter are natives. Their ancestors were here when the Susquehannock Indians used the area as a hunting ground. Some have been brought from afar, available from nurseries after their initial discovery by plant hunters.

Geological history determines what trees thrive here. Our area was never covered in glaciers, but the nearby waters of the Severn River and the Chesapeake Bay rose and fell with the movement of the glaciers and changes in climate. Our neighborhood of West Annapolis was once covered by a warm shallow sea. Marine fossils and ancient sandbars can be found across the neighborhood. We live on the sandy Coastal Zone which extends to the Atlantic Ocean, but not far from the Piedmont with its rockier soil and boundary stretching to the Catoctin Mountains.

Imagine Annapolis Street as a tree work zone. Daily, each tree is engaged in its profession: making life easier for others. It combines light with minerals drawn from the soil, adds some carbon dioxide and water, and produces food for myriads of creatures. Its roots draw water from the earth, let the air suck it up their trunks and out their leaves as water vapor to create clouds and future rain. These trees are the lungs of our community, 'inhaling' carbon dioxide and 'exhaling' oxygen, sustaining us, and keeping our neighborhood cool and fresh. They color our world, telling us their life stories, connecting us with people and events in the past and other places, and make us think about the future we want for our families. We hope you enjoy this stroll with some of our greenest neighbors.



This publication about the trees along Annapolis Street between Taylor Avenue and Melvin Avenue in Annapolis, MD, was prepared as part of a continuing series of informational brochures about the neighborhood of West Annapolis and Wardour.

For more information, please visit: [www.westannapolis.org](http://www.westannapolis.org)  
or email: [waheritagepartnership@gmail.com](mailto:waheritagepartnership@gmail.com).

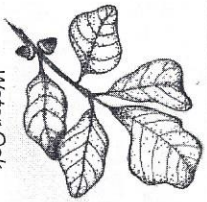
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#### SITE 1: WATER OAK

##### Down Giddings Avenue by the Segelkin Lane Sign

Water Oak, sometimes called Duck Oak because of its leaf shape, is usually an oak of the Eastern Shore, yet it was mentioned as a boundary marker for Andrew Norwood in 1658 when he secured the land which now forms Wardour. It prefers to live in low, wet places, along streams. Perhaps it lived by the Severn. How do you recognize an oak? The leaves can take many shapes, but true oaks have acorns.

Water Oak acorns are tiny with bright orange kernels. Like all oaks in the Red Oak group, Water Oak leaves have tiny points on the ends of the lobes, and acorns that take two years to mature, are bitter, and usually buried by squirrels for future use. The different shape and size of acorns is a key way to identify oak varieties.

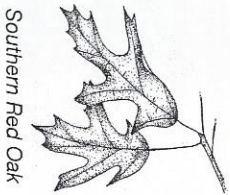


Water Oak

#### SITE 2: SOUTHERN RED OAK

##### 104 Annapolis Street

Notice the deeply cut leaves with the end lobe shaped like a sickle or a witch's finger. Sometimes known as the Spanish Oak, this is the most numerous oak on the former farm fields of West Annapolis. It likes warm, sandy soils, and has a deep taproot so is not normally transplanted. Squirrels get the credit for planting. The Southern Red Oak can live 2-300 years. This tree could easily have been here in 1813



Southern Red Oak

when this was the farm of Jonathan Pinkney and slaves worked the land. Scientific names tell us a tree's history or preferences. This one is called *Quercus falcata Michaux*, named by a French botanist who came to America in 1785. In the early days, botanists scoured the country, including Maryland, to find plants to benefit their homelands. Andre Michaux established a nursery in New Jersey to sell trees that he had collected and grown in America. He sent 5,000 young trees home to the French King in Versailles.

#### SITE 3: AMERICAN HOLLY - 106 Annapolis Street

The American Holly has points on its leaves, but it is not an oak - no acorns. Instead it grows in the understory of the forest. In the winter you can spot the holly's green leaves mixed among the bare trees. It is familiar as a sign of Christmas, but it was also one of George Washington's favorite trees. He transplanted many from the surrounding forest to grace Mt. Vernon. Why do you think hollies do not shed their leaves in winter?



#### SITE 4: NORTHERN RED OAK - 115 Annapolis Street

Northern Red Oak reminds us we live in the mid-Atlantic. While the Southern Red Oaks range extends south to Florida, the Northern prefers cooler weather and extends from here to Canada. They occur sparingly on the sandy coastal plane. They are the tallest of Maryland Oaks. Note the bark, leaves, and acorns (large with a shallow cup).

#### SITE 5: DOGWOOD - 111 Annapolis Street

Dogwood, maybe should have been called alligator wood, has bark that looks like an alligator hide. Definitely not an oak, but it likes to live in the shade that oaks create in the forest - it is an under story tree - and can be beautiful without being the tallest or strongest. It has a very important job: note the red leaves (in the fall) and the red berries or seeds - they are full of fat to help a migrating bird on its long route south. The red is like a roadside flag saying, "Stop for a snack." To humans, mice, and raccoons, the fruit is too bitter, leaving more for birds.

#### SITE 6: SILVER MAPLE - 105 Annapolis Street

Silver Maples have deeply notched leaves like a hand, lighter underneath so they look silver in the wind. As the tree ages, its bark becomes shaggy, much like that of the White Oak, the State Tree of Maryland. But instead of acorns, the Silver Maples produce an abundance of 'helicopter' seeds in the spring, almost before the leaves develop.

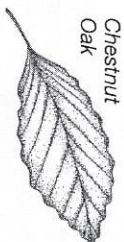


Silver Maple

#### SITE 7: CHESTNUT OAK

##### 103 Annapolis Street

Oaks are divided into two families: red oaks and white oaks. The edges of white oak leaves are rounded, no points. Their acorns develop in only one year, are relatively sweet, and so are loved by deer, squirrels, bears, etc. and they are eaten right away, but buried. Notice how the Chestnut Oaks leaves differ from the other oaks. This tree likes dry, sandy, upland soil, so its ancestors could have been one of the trees that John Norwood found on this spot when he settled the land in 1650. One of Captain Norwood's roles, in addition to being the first Sheriff of Anne Arundel County, was leading the militia on this side of the Severn River, protecting the settlers against Indians.



Chestnut Oak

The Chestnut Oak's scientific name is *Quercus pinus lineans*, or just an L at the end. Years ago, a tree might have several names, making identification confusing. So the early explorers sent their acorns, leaves and descriptions to Karl Linneaus, a Swedish botanist who created a whole new system of naming plants giving them their family and genus. The 'L' is another way to know that Chestnut Oaks were native here before 1735 when Karl Linneaus did his work.

The scientific name of the Pin Oak (behind the bench at Morgan Gerard) is *Quercus palustris* - which means it is an oak of the marshes. It likes to live along flood-plains, and does not have a long, deep root because it prefers to have its feet in shallow water. So, this tree has been planted by humans. It grows quickly, easily transplanted. John Norwood would not have seen this tree here. Where would he have had to go to see it? Notice how the leaves are deeply notched. Can you find an acorn? Pin Oaks are characterized by lower branches that point downward, middle branches to the side and upper branches to the sky. Many trees retain their dead, lower branches like pins.

### SITE 8 : EUROPEAN HORNBREAM - 101 Annapolis Street

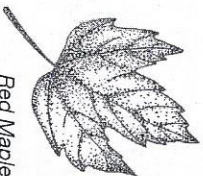
European Hornbeams introduce a section of the street characterized by human planting. Why would the two tall trees in front of the entrance to Morgan Gerard be good advertisements for an expensive beauty salon? They are very elegant; every branch, twig, and leaf in place, just like a fashionable lady. These are trees of Europe and Asia Minor. Also known as Ironwood, the European Hornbeams have been the source of drumsticks, and maybe even the chariots of ancient Rome.



Willow Oak

### SITE 9: WILLOW OAK - McCrone Parking Lot

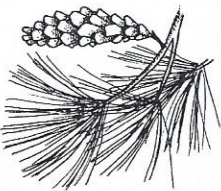
Do you think the trees surrounding the parking lot are red oaks, white oaks, or something else? These are Willow Oaks with small, bitter acorns and tiny points on the leaves. In the wild, these trees would tell you that they were in a Southern Mixed Hardwood Swamp Forest. They prefer to grow along streams. Grackles and Blue Jays love their acorns. People use their wood to make church pews and all kinds of furniture. Since they like water, they have shallow roots with no taproot, making them easy to dig up and replant. See if you can find the Pin Oak among the Willows.



Red Maple

### SITE 10: RED MAPLE - 17 Annapolis Street

Red Maples are distinguished by the red leaf stalks, red flowers in spring and red foliage in fall. Is there any way you could tell that this tree also liked swamps? Note how their roots grow along the top of the ground. Roots need air, and soil usually has lots of holes for tiny bits of air. But if the soil is very wet, the air is shoved out and the roots cannot breathe.



White Pine

### SITE 11: EASTERN WHITE PINE

#### 15 Annapolis Street

These three trees remind us of history and far-away places. The Eastern White Pine has long needles in bundles of five, branches that grow in whorls of five around the tree, a circle for each year, and often a long, tall straight trunk. Space between whorls tells whether the tree has had an easy or hard year. Years ago, the English had the greatest naval fleet in the world, but they were running out of tall, straight, lightweight trees for the masts of their sailing ships. They discovered the white pines of New Hampshire and other New England States.

### SITE 11: EASTERN WHITE PINE contd. 15 Annapolis Street

They would mark the best trees with a royal blaze, reserved for the king of England. But the settlers thought of the trees as their own, not property of some king who lived far away. They would sneak into the forest and cut down the trees, haul them away before the King's foresters could come and get them. Disputes over the White Pine were one of the causes of the American Revolution. In 1777, when John Paul Jones sailed out to sea to fight the British, he did so in a ship with the tallest White Pine masts that had gone to sea. White Pines once grew to great heights, but were logged until they were almost gone. Their fate inspired citizens to protect the great forests in the West, so the White Pine served our country well.

Next to the pine is a tree with short, bluish needles, a Colorado Blue Spruce. You would not have seen this tree in Maryland until long after the Civil War. In 1862 C.C. Parry climbed to the top of Pikes Peak in Colorado and discovered this wonderful tree. Amazingly, this tree can remind us of people who once lived here. Parry was a botanist who was charged with helping determine our country's boundary after the Mexican-American War. Major Luther Giddings, who bought all of our property, fought in that war when he was a young man. In fact, his service was so important to him that his daughters named one of the streets in the new West Annapolis after a battle he fought in Mexico, Monterey Avenue, and another after the Major himself, Giddings Avenue.

Tucked down the driveway is another bluish conifer, the Atlas Cedar, native to the Atlas Mountains of Algeria and Morocco. The Atlas Cedar is one of the four true cedars in the world. The Decodar Cedar is another true cedar planted in our neighborhood. But trees we call cedars, such as the Red Cedar, are not really cedars at all, but juniper trees.

### SITE 12: SILVER MAPLE

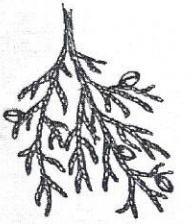
#### Cross Street to 4 Annapolis Street

Silver Maple. Go up on the porch and look at the hole in the trunk of the Silver Maple. Who could live there? Do you think this tree is healthy? It is doing just fine creating a snug home for a raccoon or squirrel.



Silver Maple

Each year, the tree puts a new layer of cells along the outside of the trunk, just inside the bark. This layer of cells is the lifeblood of the tree, bringing water and minerals from the soil and carrying food made in the leaves. Without this layer the tree would die, but the center portion of the trunk is deadwood, support, and easily shared with others. This tree is older than the one we saw earlier. Notice its wonderful, shaggy bark.



Eastern Red Cedar

**SITE 13: RED CEDAR - 10 Annapolis Street**

Trees in strange places can cause you to ask questions, become a neighborhood detective. Cedar Waxwings and other birds love Red Cedar berries and often help to plant the trees when they rest along the edge of a fence. (Four trees in the second row). Could this be what happened here?

By asking these questions, we discovered that this was a small farm, but #10 Annapolis Street once stood on the West Annapolis Elementary School grounds. Originally a two-room schoolhouse, it was remodeled as the Teacherage, home to several of the school's teachers. In the mid-1930's, this building and the one at #12 Annapolis (the original West Annapolis Methodist Episcopal Church) were rolled up the street to a new site. Red Cedars have evergreen, scale-like 'leaves' with reddish, fibrous bark. Inside, the wood is red and aromatic, often used for cedar chests, furniture, pencils, even log cabins - definitely a native.

**Site 14: DAWN REDWOOD - 14 Annapolis Street**

The tall, cone-shaped conifer, a Dawn Redwood, can give you an idea of what trees looked like in the time of the dinosaurs. In 1941, a Chinese forester encountered three unknown trees in a remote valley in China. During the 1940's, the Chinese made attempts to collect samples of these strange trees and discovered that they were living examples of fossils, trees that had dominated the Arctic Forests millions of years ago. The Dawn Redwood was first reintroduced into the United States in 1948, but since all the seeds were from one tree, they did not thrive. After the cold war, when the US could again partner with China, a new expedition to collect seeds began and Dawn Redwoods have returned. They can grow six feet a year, shed their leaves in winter and start bearing cones when they are about 25 years old. The Grape Myrtle (native to Japan and China) and the Japanese Cutleaf Maple thrive on the East Coast because our soils and climate are more closely related to Southeast Asia than to those of Southern Europe.

**SITE 15: FLOWERING CHERRIES**

**24 Annapolis Street**

Flowering Cherries bordering the walk are one of the many varieties sent from Japan in 1912 as a symbol of friendship to the United States. This variety was originally planted around East Potomac Park in Washington, D.C. In 1952, Japan asked for help in restoring the parent trees of the Tidal Basin Cherries which had declined during WWII. The U.S. returned the gift of friendship by sending budwood from the original trees. Over the years, this cycle of giving has continued, a true characteristic of friendship. In Japan, cherry trees, also known as Sakura, symbolize beauty and the fragility of life. They provide the opportunity to celebrate with family and friends. What a great idea.

We hope you have enjoyed this walk with some of our green neighbors. Below is a checklist of trees identified throughout West Annapolis/Wardour.

See how many you can discover!

- |                                  |                                   |                            |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ___ Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven)   | ___ Hawthorn                      | ___ Pagoda                 |
| ___ Apple                        | ___ Hemlock, Eastern              | ___ Paulownia              |
| ___ Arborvitae, American         | ___ Hickory, Bitternut            | ___ Peach                  |
| ___ Arborvitae, Japanese         | ___ Hickory, Pignut               | ___ Pear, Bradford         |
| ___ Ash, Green                   | ___ Hickory, Sand                 | ___ Pear, Suckle           |
| ___ Ash, White                   | ___ Holly, American               | ___ Persimmon              |
| ___ Bamboo                       | ___ Holly, Burford                | ___ Pine, Austrian         |
| ___ Beech, American              | ___ Holly, Nellie Stevens         | ___ Pine, Japanese Black   |
| ___ Beech, English (Purple)      | ___ Hornbeam, European            | ___ Pine, Loblolly         |
| ___ Birch, River                 | ___ Juniper, Pfizer               | ___ Pine, Mugo             |
| ___ Birch, White                 | ___ Linden, American (Basswood)   | ___ Pine, Virginia         |
| ___ Boxelder                     | ___ Linden, Little-leaf           | ___ Pine, White            |
| ___ Catalpa                      | ___ Locust, Black                 | ___ Plum, Flowering        |
| ___ Cedar, Atlas                 | ___ Locust, Honey                 | ___ Plum, Purple           |
| ___ Cedar, Deodar                | ___ Magnolia, Saucer              | ___ Poplar, European White |
| ___ Cedar, Red                   | ___ Magnolia, Southern            | ___ Redbud                 |
| ___ Cherry, Flowering            | ___ Magnolia, Star                | ___ Redwood, Dawn          |
| ___ Cherry, Black (Wild)         | ___ Magnolia, Sweet Bay           | ___ Sassafras              |
| ___ Cherry, European Cultivated  | ___ Magnolia, Tulip               | ___ Sourgum                |
| ___ Cherry, Sweet                | ___ Maple, Japanese Cutleaf Green | ___ Spruce, Colorado Blue  |
| ___ Cherry, Weeping              | ___ Maple, Japanese Green         | ___ Spruce, Norway         |
| ___ Chestnut, Chinese            | ___ Maple, Japanese Red           | ___ Sweet Gum              |
| ___ Crabapple                    | ___ Maple, Norway                 | ___ Sycamore               |
| ___ Grape Myrtle                 | ___ Maple, Purple Norway          | ___ Tulip                  |
| ___ Cryptomeria (Japanese Cedar) | ___ Maple, Red                    | ___ Viturnum               |
| ___ Cypress, Golden False        | ___ Maple, Silver                 | ___ Walnut, Black          |
| ___ Cypress, Hinoki              | ___ Mimosa                        | ___ Walnut, English        |
| ___ Cypress, Leland              | ___ Mulberry, White               | ___ Willow, Weeping        |
| ___ Cypress, Sawara              | ___ Oak, Black                    | ___ Yew                    |
| ___ Dogwood, Flowering Pink      | ___ Oak, Chestnut                 | ___ Zelkova                |
| ___ Dogwood, Flowering White     | ___ Oak, English                  |                            |
| ___ Dogwood, Kousa               | ___ Oak, Pin                      |                            |
| ___ Elm, Siberian                | ___ Oak, Red Northern             |                            |
| ___ Elm, Slippery                | ___ Oak, Red Southern             |                            |
| ___ Ginkgo                       | ___ Oak, Sawtooth                 |                            |
|                                  | ___ Oak, Swamp Chestnut           |                            |
|                                  | ___ Oak, Water                    |                            |
|                                  | ___ Oak, Willow                   |                            |
|                                  | ___ Orange, Osage                 |                            |