Small Flowering Trees of Wave Hill

SELF-GUIDED TOUR
Known for its statuesque tree specimens, Wave Hill’s smaller trees bring a more human scale to the landscape. Many of these trees flower in the spring or early summer.

This self-guided walking tour highlights some of our finest examples. Most are decorative throughout the year, with spectacular foliage and interesting fruits in fall or fascinating bark patterns and twisting branches best observed in winter. Because of their compact size, these trees are excellent choices for the home garden.

The map on pages 8 and 9 will guide you on your stroll through the grounds to take in the glories of these delightful petite trees.

1 | Flowering Cherry
(Prunus ‘Hally Jolivette’)
LOWER LAWN, PLANTED 1992

‘Hally Jolivette’ is a hybrid of two cherry species, Prunus subhirtella and P. × yedoensis. This shrubby tree is neat and compact, growing to only 15 feet. Showy, white blossoms with dark-pink centers decorate these trees for several weeks each spring. The leaves emerge with a coppery sheen and then slowly convert to dark green for summer. In autumn, the metallic theme returns when the foliage turns a lovely bronze color.
2 | **White Fringe Tree**  
(*Chionanthus virginicus*)  
LOWER LAWN, PLANTED 1968  

Although unremarkable for most of the year, this small, native tree, when in bloom, is so smothered with silvery-white, silky flowers that only the tips of the fresh green leaves poke through—a lovely sight in spring. Fringe trees are dioecious—either male or female—and male plants are showier in flower than the females. Small, olive-shaped fruits ripen in late summer on female plants, providing food for local birds.

3 | **Variegated Giant Dogwood**  
(*Cornus controversa ‘Variegata’*)  
WAVE HILL LAWN (WEST OF AQUATIC GARDEN), PLANTED 1997  

Closely related to our native flowering dogwoods, this variegated form of an Asian species is a superbly elegant tree. Small, white flower clusters cover the branches in late spring. Its pale-cream and green foliage lights up this part of the lawn for the entire growing season.
4 | Crapemyrtle
(*Lagerstroemia* ‘Natchez’)
FRONT OF WAVE HILL HOUSE. PLANTED 1996
Often associated with the mild-wintered, southern United States, crapemyrtles can thrive farther north, even here in the Bronx. This lovely selection from the U.S. National Arboretum shows off sprays of pure white flowers in late summer and beautiful, cinnamon-colored bark throughout the year.

5 | Redbud
(*Cercis canadensis* ‘Forest Pansy’)
SHADE BORDER, PLANTED 1996
Redbuds are best known for their deep pink blooms in early spring. ‘Forest Pansy’ is a handsome, purple-leaved selection of this native tree. In nature, redbuds grow as understory trees that enjoy a shady location beneath the canopy of larger trees. Such trees can develop a wayward growth habit as they seek out the filtered light.
6 | Flowering Dogwood
(Cornus florida ‘Cloud Nine’)
WILD GARDEN, PLANTED 1974

At bloom time, it is the showy white bracts (modified leaves) of the native, flowering dogwood that catch all the attention. The true flowers, located in clusters and surrounded by the bracts, are tiny, green and hardly ever noticed. Technicalities aside, this tree is a beauty when in flower and the fall foliage is a gorgeous burgundy-red. ‘Cloud Nine’ is one of the best selections.

7 | Tree Lilacs
Japanese Tree Lilac (Syringa reticulata ‘Ivory Silk’)
Peking Tree Lilac (Syringa reticulata subsp. pekinensis)
GREAT LAWN, TWO TREES PLANTED 1986

Although closely related to the common lilac (Syringa vulgaris), these two representatives of this Asian species are quite different. Both are larger (hence “tree” lilac) and the blooms appear as huge, creamy-white panicles late in spring. The Japanese tree lilac (the lower of the two bark images above) has smooth bark, patterned with conspicuous lenticels (pores). The Peking tree lilac has interesting, flaking bark that peels off in papery scrolls.
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   Syringa reticulata ‘Ivory Silk’
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8 | Star Magnolias
   Magnolia stellata cultivars

9 | Japanese Snowbell
   Styrax japonicus ‘Crystal’

10 | Tall Stewartia
    Stewartia monadelpha

11 | Sweet Bay Magnolia
    Magnolia virginiana

12 | Kousa Dogwood
    Cornus kousa

13 | Sargent Crabapple
    Malus sargentii
Japanese Snowbell
(*Styrax japonicus* ‘Crystal’)

GLYNDOR GALLERY, PLANTED 1993

This Japanese snowbell cultivar is smothered with tiny, white, bell-shaped flowers in late May and early June. Set against its dark-green leaves, the blossoms create an enchanting effect, especially if encountered in the evening light. A perfect tree for a small space, ‘Crystal’ begs to be planted next to a path so that passers-by can appreciate its dainty, fragrant blooms.

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Star Magnolias
(*Magnolia stellata* cultivars)

ENTRANCE LAWN, GROUP PLANTED PRIOR TO 1965

Petite star magnolias are refined trees, requiring little maintenance or fuss. Early each spring, they display masses of white or pale-pink blooms. Smooth, silvery-gray bark and fat fuzzy flower buds provide winter interest. Both the common name and the specific epithet of the scientific name (*stellata*) refer to the star-like shape of the flowers.
10 | Tall Stewartia  
*(Stewartia monadelpha)*  
**GLYNDOR GALLERY LAWN, PLANTED 1999**  
Despite its name, tall stewartia is a small tree that grows less than 30 feet high in a garden setting. However, in its native Japan, some wild specimens achieve 75 feet or more. Its flaking, cinnamon-colored bark is attractive all year, and the lustrous olive-green summer foliage turns a spectacular rusty-orange in the fall. Small, white flowers with yellow centers appear for several weeks in late spring.

11 | Sweet Bay Magnolia  
*(Magnolia virginiana)*  
**GLYNDOR GALLERY, TWO TREES PLANTED 1995**  
This semi-evergreen magnolia is native to the south and the eastern coastal plains of the U.S. Although often found in wet and swampy places, it is adaptable and will grow in most garden soils. It blooms over a long period—from late spring into summer—with a few, sweetly-scented flowers opening at any one time. Showy, red fruits attract foraging birds in late fall.
12 | **Kousa Dogwood**  
*(Cornus kousa)*

**BELOW PERGOLA/LOWER LAWN, PLANTED 1960s**

The kousa (or Korean) dogwood is a handsome tree in all seasons. The blooms are smaller and appear later than those of native flowering dogwoods, but they are very plentiful and long-lasting, giving us a little continuation of spring well into June. The fleshy, pinkish-red fruits ripen in late summer, decorating the tree until hungry squirrels and birds devour them in a feeding frenzy. In the winter, the flaking bark shows up especially well against the muted colors of the landscape.

13 | **Sargent Crabapple**  
*(Malus sargentii)*

**VIBURNUM BED, PLANTED 1973**

The Sargent crabapple is a small tree with a lot of character. Here it is superbly matched with its neighbor, the evergreen plum yew (*Cephalotaxus harringtonia*). Their natural low-growing habit, enhanced by careful pruning, provides year-round interest without interrupting the views of the Palisades. Pale-pink blossoms smother the tree in spring, followed by multitudes of tiny, red fruits in fall.
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Images used in this brochure were taken by Wave Hill staff and by Joshua Bright. The inset image of the crapemyrtle on page 4, taken by jcapaldi, was downloaded from flickr.com/photos/jcapaldi/6107327970 under Creative Commons Attribution License 2.0.

Wave Hill is a public garden and cultural center in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. Its mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.