



Photo: Ngoc Minh Ngo

Wave Hill 60th Anniversary Legacy Trees

What is it about a tree that creates an undeniable connection between people and plants?

Photo: Dave Sanders



Humans venerate trees not only for their environmental virtues, but for their personalities and the way they speak to us. When you walk around Wave Hill, you might find yourself saying, “I love that tree.”

We have so many that spark emotions, ignite curiosity, and inspire art.

Mature trees within a garden impart clues about the history of place and can tell a story, just by being there. Younger trees offer hope and a vision for the future. Our trees at Wave Hill provide all of this and more, and we are passionate about caring for them.

Wave Hill prides itself on being a four-season garden that remains open all year for visitors to enjoy. Without a flower in sight, our garden continuously displays compelling design in the structure, character, and shadows of our woody plant collection. We revere them not only for the years they have provided beauty and benefit to our native ecology, but for the resilience they demonstrate in the face of dramatic weather events and new pest pressures. From our stately copper beeches, elms and lindens to our formidable sweet gums, pines and hemlocks, and our delicate paperbark maple, stewartia and crepe myrtle—we nurture all with steadfast observation, care, and yes, love.

With these intense environmental stressors, it has been necessary to dramatically increase our tree care budget to optimize tree health and bolster their defense mechanisms. We have implemented structural pruning, root crown excavations, root zone invigorations, and targeted, timely treatment for pests, when necessary.

To raise both awareness and funds needed to care for our tree collection and build our climate resiliency, we are making special sponsorship opportunities available for a select number of our legacy trees for the first time in our 60-year history!

Your contributions are vital to ensuring the longevity of our treasured friends. Thank you for being stewards of Wave Hill.

—**Cathy Deutsch**, *Director of Horticulture*



Sponsorship Opportunities at the \$60,000 Level



Great American Elm
Ulmus americana

Wave Hill’s elm is one of the oldest and largest American elms in New York City and it is precious to our garden. We estimate that this tree started growing sometime in the early to mid-1800s, making it close to 200 years old. Elms are native to this region and were often used en masse to line city streets because of their towering and graceful limbs. Many populations were devastated by Dutch Elm Disease in the first half of the 20th century. It wasn’t until the 2000s when our elm showed the telltale signs of infection in its northern branches. Since then, the tree’s life has been extended by removing diseased limbs and thoughtful management.



Majestic Copper Beeches
Fagus sylvatica ‘Atropurpurea’

Our copper beeches are the grande dames of Wave Hill. They are marvels to behold with enormous trunks and broad branches that hug the ground. Brought by barge in the late 1800s and carried by horse and carriage up from the river, these distinctive imports were a deliberate feature in the estate’s design. Originally five on the property, we have lost three to phytopthera, a fungal disease that makes fast work of depleting the tree’s resources. Now also plagued by beech leaf disease, our beeches require close attention to bolster their defense.



Sacred Oak
Quercus rubra

Thought to be the oldest tree at Wave Hill and the largest tree in our woodlands, this keystone species maintains its youthful energy with a myriad of creatures reveling in its bounty. We presume that during its early years of growth in the 1800s, its low outstretched limbs had no competition from neighboring trees. Two homes, first Nonesuch and then Glyndor, were erected on this site and both designs relied on this oak to define their central axis. All our oaks are regularly monitored for bacterial diseases closing in on our area.



Champion Black Cherry
Prunus serotina

Black cherries are quite common in the northeastern woodlands; however, this specimen wows even the most experienced foresters with its grandiose presence. A native opportunist or perhaps intentionally planted, this black cherry is a remnant of a wooded grove culled over time by the many residents of Wave Hill House. Solitary and massive, this tree has witnessed, weathered, and endured the complex stories of this landscape.

Sponsorship Opportunities at the \$25,000 Level



Ancient Ginkgo
Ginkgo biloba

The new entrance pathway was redesigned to highlight notable trees, and our *Ginkgo biloba* is a treasure worth noting. Planted in 1975, its stout trunk supports multiple branches in an uncharacteristically low-branching form. In mid-autumn, a golden aura of leaves is visible from almost every area of the garden. The fan-shaped leaves can glow for weeks before, in an instant, they carpet the ground underneath the skeleton crown, usually in time for Halloween.



Picturesque Lace Bark Pine
Pinus bungeana

A tree of unmatched character, this pine has silvery outer bark that cracks and gives way in puzzle-shaped pieces to shades of beige, purple, and green. This bark exfoliation is a normal process and a positive sign of growth. The lacebark pine is a shining feature among a small grouping of early exotic trees introduced in the mid-1900s by the Viennese landscape designer, Albert Millard. He probably never envisioned this pine growing so large that the elm’s branches would brush its tips.



Iconic Sweetgums
Liquidambar styraciflua

Historic images of these trees suggest they were planted when Armor Hall was completed, around 1920. These sweetgums are lined out like sentinels in front of Wave Hill House, perhaps at the request of Bashford Dean, to guard his unrivaled collection of armor that is today part of the permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We love them not only for their fortitude, but as a host plant for our burgeoning population of luna moth.

Sponsorship Opportunities at the \$15,000 Level



Graceful Lindens
Tilia cordata

When the warm air is perfumed with the sweet scent of honey, the linden trees are surely in bloom. Planted during the estate era and ranging in specific epithet, they all maintain the same beautiful and arching form that so many garden visitors enjoy for comforting shade. It is no wonder so many Wave Hill chairs are clustered for conversation below these graceful limbs.



Eastern Hemlock
Tsuga canadensis

In the woodland an elder specimen towers at the terminus of a Perkins-era cement path. Its two equally impressive trunks seemingly stretch into the clouds. Growing in the southernmost edge of the hemlocks’ native range, these trees are at higher risk for stressors caused by climate change and introduced pests, including woolly adelgid and elongated scale.



Giant Sequoia
Sequoiadendron giganteum ‘Hazel Smith’

A California native grows on the northern edge of Wave Hill and has called the Empire State home for over 50 years. This specimen was presented as a sapling to Wave Hill by the namesake herself, Hazel Smith of Watnong Nursery in New Jersey. What makes this cultivar so special is its ability to survive New York City’s cold and dry winters. The leaves have a blue-cast or glaucous coloration due to a waxy cuticle that protects them from drying out. Its soft blue appearance adds unique texture and color to our collection of conifers.

Sponsor a Legacy Tree!

Contact support@wavehill.org or 718.549.3200 x212

Make a Gift to Care for Our Trees

Your donation helps provide resources, tools, and care needed to ensure our trees thrive and underwrites programs that inspire environmental stewardship.

Every gift, big and small makes a difference. To donate, scan the QR code.





Tree sponsorships are for 15 years. Sponsors will be recognized on the tree identification label and will receive a beautiful certificate of their tree.

Wave Hill welcomes gifts of many kinds, including donor advised funds, wire transfers, IRA transfers and securities. You can also increase your impact by submitting a matching gift form from a participating employer.

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