

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Extension Master Gardeners partner with Canton Park District to develop tree walks

Have you ever wanted to know how to identify trees in your yard or wondered why the leaves turn different colors in the fall? [University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners](#) (EMG) are bringing answers to these questions and more to interactive tree walks hosted by [Canton Park District](#).

In October, EMG Terry Meade led a group of 30 attendees on a guided tree walk at Big Creek Park in Canton. More than 25 trees were discussed during the hike, with clues given on how to identify certain species. Attendees were able to observe the unique leaf arrangement patterns and shapes, along with bark structure and twig/bud characteristics.

For example, according to Terry the Northern Catalpa is easy to identify because of its bright green leaves. Another easy one to pick out at Big Creek Park is the American Sycamore. They are “absolutely magnificent in size and grandeur.”

“One of the best parts of the walk was seeing three generations of families participating. Many parents with school age children attended as there was no school that day, so I was able to make it a mix for young and old alike,” explained Terry. “There was so much interest, we have the next one already scheduled.”

Terry completed the Mastering Urban Tree Health and Identification program available for certified Illinois Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. Utilizing a train the trainer model, this program combines online learning modules with hands on forestry workshops. Graduates are encouraged to put their knowledge to work by volunteering in their communities.

Terry has also inventoried trees at Wallace Park in Canton. Established in 1950, the park was originally home to the city’s water plant. Utilizing city plans for the park as a guide, Terry and fellow EMGs Kathy Phillips and Radine Kellogg identified more than 60 trees located within the park, 14 of them Illinois native species.

“Partnering with University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists has helped us ensure visitors have access to high quality nature experiences and education,” commented Amanda Atchley, Superintendent of Recreation at Canton Park District. “We are excited to expand these activities for our 100 year celebration in 2023.”

The next guided tree walk is set for June 11, 2023. Signage and brochures are also in development.



Photo by Anita Wilkinson | Illinois Extension

Extension Master Gardener Terry Meade is working with Canton Park District to offer educational events and create signage and brochures to help people learn how to identify trees. Terry recently hosted a tree walk at Big Creek Park and has completed a tree inventory at Wallace Park in Canton.

Tara Heath

Horticulture
Program Coordinator
tsheath@illinois.edu