

Field Trip to Wissahickon Park, near Historic Rittenhousetown and the “Toleration” statue, April 30, 2017

This trip was organized in conjunction with Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers (WRV), an ecological restoration group based in the Wissahickon section of Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. The leaders were Dr. David Hewitt, many of whose students attended as part of the class “Trees of Philadelphia” sponsored the Wagner Free Institute of Science; Dr. Ryan Rebozo, President of the Philadelphia Botanical Club, and Mr. Steve Jones, President of WRV. The tour included sites that are part of Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park.

Participants gathered at the office of WRV within the historic industrial village at Rittenhousetown. The area was settled by Europeans ca. 1690 and has undergone various types of ecological disturbance and regeneration since that time. The first leg of the survey consisted of observations along a narrow foot trail at the northern edge of the historic village. This area is now in the process of reverting to forest, and provides a good example of a disturbed urban forest undergoing succession. Characteristic tree canopy species in this section included *Acer rubrum*, *Acer negundo*, *Fagus grandifolia*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Prunus serotina*, *Quercus alba*, *Q. montana*, *Q. rubra*, along with significant presence of exotic trees such as *Acer platanoides*. This area also featured a tall and so far apparently disease-free specimen of *Castanea dentata*. To the extent that it was present, the understory was characterized by *Lindera benzoin* and exotics, including *Lonicera amurensis*, and *Euonymus alatus*. The forest floor included *Impatiens pallida*, *Persicaria virginiana* and exotics *Alliaria petiolata*, *Ampelopsis glandulosa*, *Aralia elata*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Rosa multiflora* and *Wisteria sinensis*.

The tour continued through an open field used for recreation purposes. Group leaders noted plantings of *Pinus nigra* and specimens of *Tilia* sp.

The tour continued to a more rugged and less recently disturbed section of forest north of the RittenhouseTown area, in the vicinity of the “Toleration” statue dedicated to William Penn. Generally, leaders noted a marked increase in plant diversity in this area, and a greater density of plants typical of thin acid soils including members of the family Ericaceae. Characteristic canopy trees included, in addition to those noted above, *Carya cordiformis* and a scattering of *Tsuga canadensis*. This area also included a more diverse understory, including in addition to the plants mentioned above, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Cercis canadensis*, *Cornus racemosa*, large stands of *Euonymus americanus*, *Hamamelis virginiana*, *Kalmia latifolia*, one specimen of *Rhododendron periclymenoides*, *Viburnum acerifolium* and *V. dentatum*. Characteristic plants of the forest floor included those noted above, and *Acerum canadense*, *Eurybia divaricata*, *Hieracium venosum*, *Lonicera sempervirens*, *Maianthemum canadense*, *M. racemosum*, *Mitchella repens*, *Podophyllum peltatum*, *Polygonatum pubescens*, *P. biflorum*, *Smilax rotundifolia*, *Vaccinium angustifolia*, and *V. corymbosum*. This area also yielded a small population of *Epigaea repens*.

A complete list of the plants noted includes the following:

Acer rubrum, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Acer negundo*, *Acer platanoides*, *Aegopodium podogaria*, *Alliaria petiolata*, *Ampelopsis glandulosa*, *Aralia elata*, *Arisaema triphyllum*, *Aronia* sp., *Asarum canadense*, *Betula lenta*, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Carya cordiformis*, *Castanea dentata*, *Cercis canadensis*, *Convallaria majalis*, *Cornus florida*, *Cornus racemosa*, *Cryptotaenium canadensis*, *Daucus carota*, *Epifagus virginiana*, *Epigaea repens*, *Euonymus americana*, *Euonymus alatus*,

Eurybia divaricata, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Fagus grandifolia*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, *Galium aparine*, *Hamamelis virginiana*, *Hedera helix*, *Hieracium venosum*, *Impatiens pallida*, *Kalmia latifolia*, *Lindera benzoin*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Lonicera japonica*, *Lonicera amurensis*, *Lonicera sempervirens*, *Magnolia tripetala*, *Maianthemum canadense*, *Maianthemum racemosum*, *Mitchella repens*, *Nyssa sylvatica*, *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, *Persicaria virginiana*, *Persicaria* sp., *Pinus strobus*, *Pinus nigra*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Podophyllum peltatum*, *Polygonatum pubescens*, *Polygonatum biflorum*, *Prunus serotina*, *Prunus* sp., *Quercus alba*, *Quercus rubra*, *Quercus montana*, *Quercus* sp., *Ranunculus* sp., *Rhododendron maximum*, *Rhododendron periclymenoides*, *Rhododendron* sp., *Rhodotypos scandens*, *Rhus* sp., *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Rosa multiflora*, *Rubus phoenicolasius*, *Sassafras albidum*, *Smilax rotundifolia*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Tilia* sp., *Toxicodendron radicans*, *Trifolium repens*, *Trillium grandiflora*, *Trillium* sp., *Tsuga canadensis*, *Urtica dioica*, *Vaccinium angustifolia*, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, *Veronica persica*, *Viburnum dentatum*, *Viburnum acerifolium*, *Viola* sp., *Wisteria sinensis*.

Submitted by Steve Jones