

Madison Riverfront Tree Walk

Welcome to a walk celebrating the trees of Madison! This guide highlights just a few of the many beautiful trees you'll find along Madison's Riverfront. The walk starts at the Madison-Milton Bridge and heads west until Vaughn Drive curves north. This isn't a complete list, but more will be added in the future. As you walk, look for the brass markers near each tree to learn more about them.



Trees on this walk (from east to west):

1. River birch
2. Red bud
3. Sweet gum
4. Canadian hemlock
5. Silver maple
6. Sycamore
7. Northern catalpa
8. Tulip poplar
9. Bald cypress
10. Cottonwood

River birch, *Betula nigra*

Birch love water and full sun. They are grown for their interesting bark and rapid growth.

Red Bud, *Cercis canadensis*

A smaller tree that can grow in full sun or full shade, it is primarily grown for its attractive spring flowers. New varieties developed yearly featuring new flower colors, different tree shapes, and foliage color.

Sweet Gum, *Liquidambar styraciflua*

Sweet gum has beautiful star shaped leaves that turn amazing colors in the fall. Unfortunately, they also drop spiky fruits commonly called gumballs. New varieties have been developed that are very columnar and produce no fruit.

Canadian hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*

Its ability to handle many difficult soil conditions makes hemlock a good choice for river cities. Don't confuse the tree with the hemlock that killed Socrates! A chemical produced by this tree is currently being used to treat leukemia.

Silver maple, *Acer saccharinum*

These beautiful trees are rarely planted in cities any more as brittle wood makes them susceptible to breakage. The silver backed leaves shake and shimmer in the wind making this tree good for decoration and shade.

Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*

A good plant for wildlife, the sycamore, or American planetree as it is also called, is usually planted for its striking bark and abundant shade.

Northern catalpa, *Catalpa speciosa*

Planted for its big, heart shaped leaves, rounded top, and open structure (not to mention the flowers) catalpas add interest and character to the riverfront.

Tulip poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Careful placement is necessary so this giant won't interfere with power lines and buildings but the rewards are beautiful spring flowers and fall foliage.

Bald cypress, *Taxodium distichum*

A great tree for river city soils, the tendency for these trees to grow woody columns from the soil around it, called "knees", should be considered. They can make cutting the grass challenging

Cottonwood, *Populus deltoides*

Cottonwoods were historically planted as wind and snow breaks, and to stabilize soil. They can grow up to 6 feet a year providing shade quickly.

**The best time to plant a tree
was 20 years ago. The second
best time is now.**

Let's plant more trees!



MADISON
Indiana