

A *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* in full fall color frames the Cutting Garden

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Trees at Chanticleer

Many have heard of Chanticleer's imaginative and exuberant displays of herbaceous plants. Fewer have noted that it is a significant arboretum, where magnificent trees sculpt the landscape.

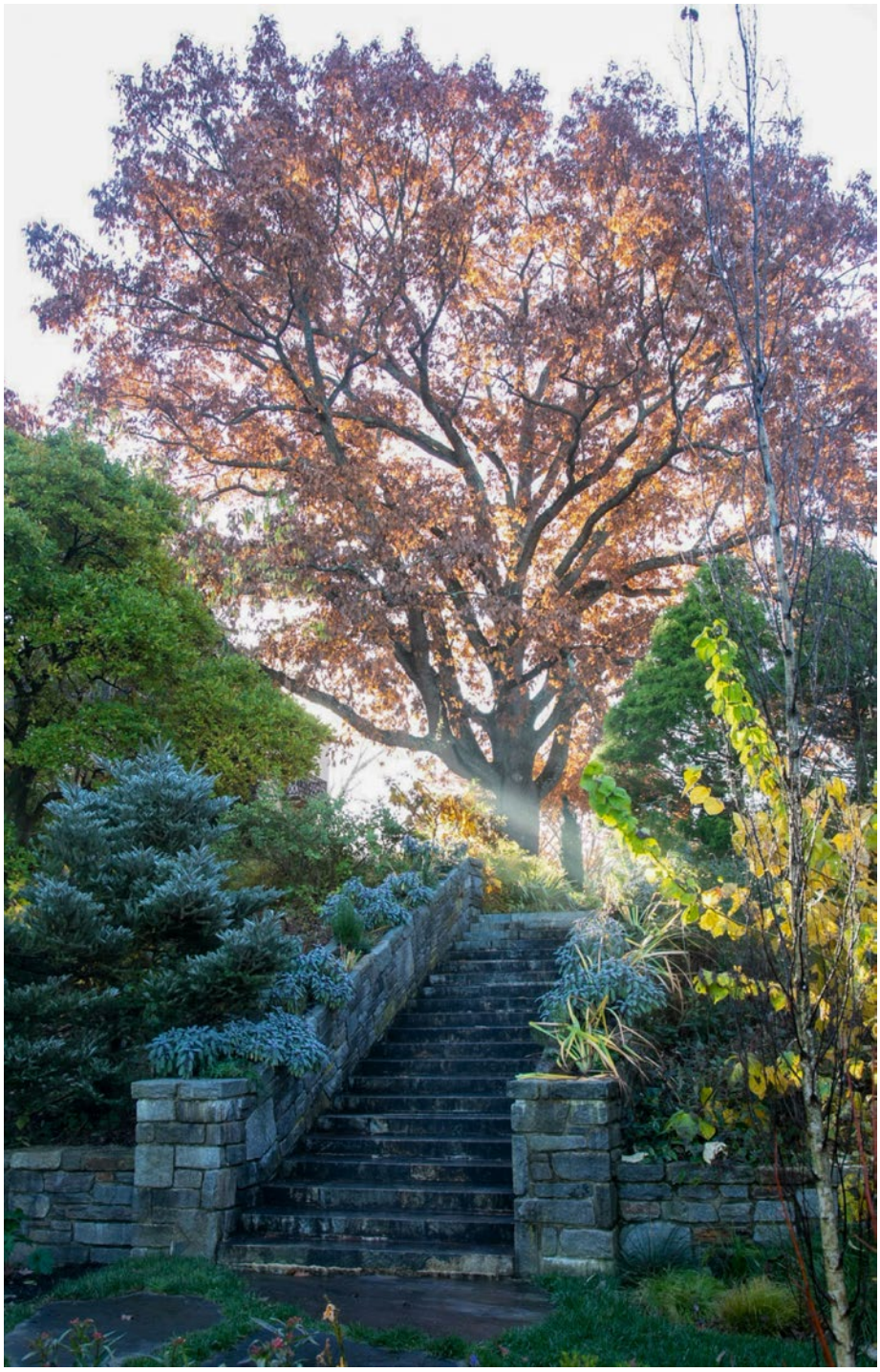
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Trees define the space, frame the views and sky, and in autumn join the colorful display. Even in summer, some individuals add yellow and red purple to the landscape. Yellow and chartreuse-leaved specimens include *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia', *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea', *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* [Gold Rush] 'Golden Oji', *Ulmus* × *hollandica* 'Dampieri Aurea', and *U. procera* 'Aurea'. On the red-purple

end of the spectrum, cultivars of *Fagus sylvatica* such as 'Dawyck Purple', 'Red Obelisk', 'Spaethiana', and 'Riversii' take the stage.

In autumn, *Liriodendron tulipifera* and several species of *Carya* burst into flames of gold. *Nyssa sylvatica* and *Oxydendrum arboreum* color early with shades of red and orange. *Fagus grandifolia* turns rusty orange, contrasting with its smooth grey bark. Emerging from their



Quercus × *saulii* above the Tennis Court Garden, near the main entrance





Above and left, *Picea abies* 'Pendula' guarding the path to the Ruin

summer camouflage, evergreen conifers (notably *Picea orientalis*, *Abies nordmanniana*, *Thuja plicata*, *Juniperus virginiana*, *Pinus strobus*, and *P. parviflora*) stand in dark contrast to the intoxicating colors of the deciduous trees, while *Larix*, *Pseudolarix*, *Taxodium*,



Juglans nigra, one of the original trees on the Chanticleer property

and *Metasequoia* join the yellows and oranges of their angiosperm brethren. *Metasequoia* provides the finale for the autumn show, reaching its peak color in mid-November.

In 1912, when Christine and Adolph Rosengarten, Sr., purchased the first seven acres (three hectares) of what would become Chanticleer, the property's eastern border was a dirt farm road. It was lined with mature *Juglans nigra* and a double-trunked *Carya ovata*. The hickory

and three of the black walnuts remain today. These are the oldest trees we know of on the property, presumably dating from the latter half of the 1800s. The walnuts make themselves known from August through October by raining nuts on the path, and the hickory shows off with a brilliant gold in mid-autumn.

There are several wooded areas in today's 50-acre (20-hectare) public garden. *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *Fagus grandifolia* dominate the



A double-trunked *Carya ovata* showing its shaggy bark and fall color in early October



Quercus alba near the Gravel Garden, surrounded by younger *Sciadopitys verticillata*

woodlots, with occasional towering *Quercus alba* and *Q. rubra*, and lightened by the bright bark of *Platanus occidentalis* in low areas. Each colors vibrantly from October to November. The purplish orange of *Fraxinus americana* until recently filled the canopy, but sadly, emerald ash borer has killed all but the several specimens we are treating. *Fagus grandifolia* and *F. sylvatica* now face the fatal nematodes that cause beech leaf disease. More than a century ago, *Castanea dentata* was wiped out by chestnut blight, and it is dreadful to contemplate the loss of another major tree genus.

The naturally occurring hybrid *Quercus* × *saulii* grows above the Tennis Court Garden near our entrance. It is a cross between two natives, *Q. alba* and *Q. montana*. It was probably thought to be a white oak and planted soon after the house for the Rosengarten's daughter Emily was built in 1935. The tree is massive, causing guests to assume it is much older than its 90 years. I'm fortunate to look upon the tree from my office, and I especially enjoy the birdlife, such as Baltimore orioles, in its branches. The tree, like more than 20 on the property, has a lightning protection cable.



Diospyros virginiana growing on the edge of Asian Woods where its suckers grow across the path from their parent tree on the right.

Along the edge of Asian Woods is a tall *Diospyros virginiana* with the most intriguing bark in the garden. It is a male and thus produces no fruit, but it suckers vigorously. We've let several of the suckers that spread under the main pathway grow into trees. *Nyssa sylvatica* and *Sassafras albidum* are other suckering natives, both coloring well in autumn.



Diospyros virginiana bark

Many of our glorious trees are natives, but there are some notable exotics, too. A pair

of *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* graces the western edge of the Cutting Garden. We've found no record of their planting, but estimate that our founder, Adolph Rosengarten, Jr., planted them in the 1930s. Interestingly, one tree is a wide-spreading male; the other, more upright tree is female. It produces enough miniature banana-shaped capsules to cover the ground in mulch. To protect the plants' roots, we have fenced off the area under the branches.

Nine *Picea abies* 'Pendula', planted in 2004, line the path leading to the Ruin, designed by Chanticleer's first Executive Director Christopher Woods. It was built in 2000 on the foundation of the home of Adolph, Jr., and his wife Janet, which was taken down to build the Ruin. Tall specimens of weeping spruce at Longwood Gardens and Winterthur inspired this planting. The cultivar is sufficiently sad to befit a ruin and humorous enough for a folly.



A pair of *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* frame the Cutting Garden. The male is on the left; the female, on the right



Taxodium distichum 'Falling Waters' draping itself over a bridge designed to resemble a fallen tree

Other notable weepers in the garden are two large *Tsuga canadensis* 'Pendula', multiple *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis* 'Glauca Pendula' that visually unite the long border near the entrance, and a *Taxodium distichum* 'Falling Waters' draping itself over a fallen tree bridge.

Above the ponds, down the slope from the Ruin and nearby Gravel Garden, is a perfectly shaped *Quercus alba*. We suspect Adolph, Jr., and Janet planted it soon after they moved into their home in 1932. Adolph, Jr., left Chanticleer to be a public garden when he died in 1990. He loved trees, especially oaks, and I consider this specimen his memorial tree, especially when it turns orange red in October.

I invite IDS members to enjoy Chanticleer's trees and other plantings whenever you are in the Philadelphia area.

R. William (Bill) Thomas

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