

Welcome to the Winter Tree Walk at Walnut Mountain Park!

Walnut Mountain Rd., Liberty NY - Open dawn to dusk – Good to wear traction on boots if icy

Dec. 25 through Jan. 18

PARKING: Enter Walnut Mt. Park from Walnut Mt. Rd. Bear right at ballfield to park near the Pavilion. Walk to the Kiosk to check out the Trail Map and begin your Winter Tree Walk.

Green ribbons mark the route and **Red** ribbons indicate the trees you will meet.

WHITE PINE: The tall trees all around the kiosk are white pines. Notice their trunks. Each one branches off into smaller pieces called “leaders.” This was caused by the white pine weevil, which is native to North America and attacks white pines. There is a very young white pine further up the trail. We will tag it with red ribbons!

Follow the green ribbons behind the pavilion and up (MO) Mountain Overlook trail. The trail is an old carriage road, dating back to the 1880’s when horse and buggies brought guests to the Walnut Mountain House at the summit. You will see the House’s old foundation later on your walk!

BLACK CHERRY: what can we say about this lovely tree?! Black cherry is easy to identify by the bark which looks like burnt potato chips. They are much-loved for their beautiful wood used in furniture.

RED OAK: Around a few curves you will see a row of big, beautiful red oaks. It is possible that these oaks were here when Walnut Mountain House was in operation. Red oaks grow quickly and can live up to 500 years!

BLACK LOCUST: Notice the deep ridges in its bark. Black locusts were widely planted for their hard and rot-resistant wood which was typically used for fence posts.

OVERLOOK: Next stop is Mountain Overlook. Check out the new Interpretive Panel. Enjoy the view which includes lots of forested land with both conifers (evergreens) and hardwoods (maple, oak, ash, beech, birch.)

Take (SS) Sunset trail for a few steps, then bear right and uphill onto (MH) Mountain House trail.

ASH: This young Ash tree has patches of bark missing, which is called blanding. If an ash is blonded, that means birds, often woodpeckers, have removed bark to look for insect larvae for food. Blanding can be a sign that the ash tree is infested with emerald ash borers (EAB).

FOUNDATION: Further up MH trail on left are remnants of the foundation of the legendary Walnut Mountain House. It was 5 stories high and slept 140 people. Guests enjoyed both sunrise and sunset. Notice the bluestone ledge rock at the summit. Enjoy the Mountain House PHOTO DISPLAY mounted near the foundation!

To meet one last tree, turn around and walk away towards the Blue Square trail (also marked with an arrow.)

SHAGBARK HICKORY Soon you will see a shagbark hickory on the right with its flaky bark. Did you know that bats and butterflies roost under the plates of bark? Pretty cool! This marks the end of the Winter Tree Walk.

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Now Turn Around, and **retrace your steps** back to the Foundation, turn left onto MH, to SS, to the Overlook.

From the Overlook, retrace your steps on Mountain Overlook Trail back to the parking area. Notice some of your new tree friends on the way downhill. They may be smiling at you as you walk by!

TREE RESOURCES: Cornell Botanic Gardens’ website, New York Botanical Gardens’ website, Trees with Don Leopold videos on Youtube are also a great resource (less than 5mins/each)

Walnut Mountain Winter Tree Walk is sponsored by Morgan Outdoors, with generous support from Kate O’Connor of the Cornell Hemlock Initiative and Liberty Dept. of Parks & Recreation