

Janice Hamilton Haldeman Arboretum at Erskine Plan

Mission statement

The mission of the Janice Hamilton Haldeman Arboretum at Erskine is to preserve the historic tree collection on Erskine's campus in order to provide a locus for recreational and educational programs integrating science and the humanities, promoting scientific research, and beautifying the campus, while contributing to regional biodiversity and supporting environmental stewardship.

Objectives

Due West is a National Historic District, with Erskine College as the central portion. Due West is in the Upstate region which is the most biologically diverse area in South Carolina, and one of the most diverse in the world. Erskine is focused on the preservation and responsible stewardship of its 93-acre campus. In order to accomplish these goals, this plan has the following objectives:

- To preserve and care for the trees currently inhabiting the arboretum space.
- To add and care for new species, both native and non-native.
- To provide a living laboratory and educational experiences for the College's students.
- To educate visitors about basic tree maintenance and care.
- To celebrate trees through events within the arboretum and in the surrounding community.
- To allow private or business groups and/or individuals to submit ideas, proposals, or
- To accept and solicit donations and grant funding for the arboretum to encourage community involvement.
- To allow approved volunteer groups and/or individuals to work in the arboretum by assisting with the care and maintenance of the trees, plants, and general landscape.

History

The Erskine College campus has grown in several stages, following establishment of a four-year men's college in 1839 on a small plot of land along Main Street in Due West. Trees on the campus represent both the native trees there when the college was established, those standing in the areas where the campus expanded, and those planted according to campus plans of the late nineteenth and mid- twentieth centuries.

The campus now includes over 90 acres, occupying much of the central area of Due West. The first main building (no longer existing) was constructed in 1843. The oldest currently existing building, Philomathean Hall, was built on the main campus in 1859. In

1860, Due West Female (later Woman's) College was founded on a separate campus to the north on the opposite side of Main Street. Both campuses included trees native to the area.

Landscape architects were employed to plan tree plantings for the first time when the still-existing Erskine Building was constructed in 1892. This area of the campus still shows evidence of this planning. Erskine became coeducational during the 1890s with admission of a few women and greatly increased its female population following Erskine's merger with the Woman's College in 1927. The current appearance of the campus began to take shape with addition of Reid Science Hall (now used for business classes and the College's archives) and the McCain Library building in 1949.

The rapid campus growth of the 1950s and 1960s was accompanied by adoption of a Campus Plan. Dormitories were built on the main campus and former Woman's College campus around existing trees, including short leaf pines on the main campus. Across Main Street from the main campus, a large new campus area was developed around a mall establishing a walkway between campuses.

Constructed in this new campus area during the last half of the twentieth century were a new dining hall, student center, administration building, and art building. This expansion was all done according to a campus plan that included planting trees along the mall. Planted in the 1970s, these mature willow oaks now shade the mall.

In 2004, descendants of one of the founding families of Erskine College donated land that had once served as the family homeplace. This land encompassed several acres that now comprise the Pressly Family Heritage Garden, which is a botanical garden open to the public and used for educational purposes. A number of tree specimens identified in the arboretum collection are located in this botanical garden.

Over the last three decades, emphasis has been on increasing native tree diversity and adding non-native species, while maintaining historic tree species. Plantings of Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*), Laurel oak (*Quercus hemisphaerica*), Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), Shumard oak (*Quercus shumardii*), Sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) and River Birch (*Betula nigra*), have increased campus native species diversity. Non-native additions include Sawtooth oak (*Quercus acutissima*), Dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), California redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Japanese Cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), Maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), Empress of China dogwood (*Cornus elliptica 'Elsbry'*), Korean dogwood (*Cornus kousa*), Golden raintree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*), and Japanese flowering cherry (*Prunus serrulata*).

During this period the college added signage to selected tree species for a campus tree walk. This is accompanied by a brochure now in its second edition. Erskine's Arboretum trees will have new signage that includes common name, botanical name, and QR Code providing tree species information.

Audience

The arboretum will be open to the public during daylight hours. In addition, the arboretum will be used by faculty and undergraduate students in their studies. Further, Erskine has a strong relationship with the Abbeville County School District and their students enjoy educational field trips to campus and also volunteer in our gardens.

Management

Arboretum development and management is to be overseen by the Arboretum Committee. Maintenance of the arboretum will be overseen by the groundskeeping staff of Aramark, an outside vendor under the supervision of Bobby Clarke, Vice President of Operations and Strategic Planning. Succession plans will tie the roles of the committee members to the position held by any such individual. Aramark, student workers, and student researchers will provide the necessary labor and staff. Volunteers will be used when needed and will be overseen by Mr. Bobby Clarke and Dr. Jan Haldeman or her appointee from the Department of Biology.

Documentation of trees

A printed catalog of arboretum trees is currently available on campus. This catalog is being updated and digitized in a computer database by biology and botany students under the supervision of Dr. Haldeman and other biology faculty. This database will use GPS technology and documents many attributes of each tree, such as species, DBH, and condition. This tree archive will be updated as needed by biology and botany students under the supervision of biology faculty, committee members, and approved volunteers.

In addition to the arboretum collection, the College is working toward digitizing its extensive herbarium collection, which will be accessible from the website in the future. Herbarium specimens of all arboretum trees will be maintained and updated in the herbarium.

Master plan

If this application is accepted, the Arboretum Committee is responsible for providing, developing and implementing a short-term and long-term plan for the arboretum. The plan may be adjusted as needed at the discretion of the committee.