

U.S. National Arboretum

Hidden away for many years yet visible from New York Avenue in Northeast Washington, D.C. is the National Arboretum. Over the 1990's the research and education facility operated by the Department of Agriculture has undergone many improvements and is being better taken care of. It's a good place to visit anytime of year. Open fields and wooded hills can be accessed by paved roads. The arboretum is divided into different sections such as Azalea's (some azaleas may be 12 feet tall), Conifers, Perennials, Dogwoods. The Asian section sits on Hickey Hill, overlooking the Anacostia River and is carefully landscaped. Another point of interest are the 24 Capitol Columns standing alone in a large field as if a vision out of Rome. They were formerly part of the U.S. Capitol Building. An exhibit inside the Arboretum gates near New York Avenue displays brick kilns used to make many of Washington's row houses. The National Herb Garden is near Administrations Building which is surrounded by aquatic plants and koi. A personal favorite stop is the Bonsai and Penjing Museum. Some of the bonsai are over 300 years old.

Getting There

From Maryland

From the Capital Beltway (I-495), take John Hanson Hwy, Rte. 50, south. After 4.8 miles, Route 50 becomes New York Avenue, and enters the District of Columbia as it passes under Rte 295. After 2.25 miles at the first traffic light, turn left onto Bladensburg Rd. Turn left 0.35 miles later onto R Street. Go straight as you enter the Arboretum and use the Visitor Services parking lot

From Virginia

From the Capital Beltway (I-495), take Henry G. Shirley Hwy., I-395 north. After approximately 9.5 miles, cross the 14th Street Bridge, in the middle right most lane. As the road splits, follow it right to stay on I-395. After crossing the Francis Case Bridge over Washington Channel, bear right to the Third Street tunnel; toward the Capitol but still on I-395. In the tunnel, keep to the middle left most lane. As you emerge at New York Ave. (Rte 50), turn right (the tunnel is about 1.8 miles long). After 2.5 miles on New York Avenue, turn right onto Bladensburg Rd. Turn left 0.35 miles later onto R Street. Go straight as you enter the Arboretum and use the Visitor Services parking lot.

Area Routes

Arboretum (3.35, 3.05, or 2.65 miles, III)

Begin by circling Mount Hamilton on Azalea Rd. Mount Hamilton is a 240 foot high hill, and the route climbs part of it for a vertical gain of about 75 feet. The shortest option skips it. Nice overviews of D.C. can be seen from the high point but trees some obstruct some of it. Going down the back side, the road winds past a hillside covered with many large Azaleas. They bloom in mid-Spring. At the bottom, the road crosses a field where the Capitol columns are visible standing alone to the left. The road changes names and becomes Crabtree Rd. As it goes down toward a creek it passes daffodil gardens which bloom in early spring. After crossing the creek, with the pond on the left, turn right onto Hickey Hill Rd. This hill only climbs about 100 feet over 0.4 miles but it feels much steeper. As you labor, see some impressive Holly Trees on the

left side of the road, then glimpse the Anacostia River far below while overlooking the Asian Gardens on the right. The turn to the left before the top climbs higher to Hickey Hill Overlook but does not let you see much in addition. After cresting the hill, descend and pass the Dogwood collection on the right (blooms in mid-to-late spring). The basic route, turns right after the Dogwood Collection to pass through the Conifer Collections. A shorter route goes straight here, much more directly toward the Visitor Services parking. The shorter route is a less used by cars but neither are heavily trafficked.

Nearby and Connecting Zones

Fort Dupont
East Potomac Park & The Mall
College Park/Riverdale

What to do Afterward

Food and Drink

Picnic

Entertainment and Edification

Kennilworth Aquatic Gardens - 202 426-6905
Brick Kilns - on the Arboretum grounds near
New York Avenue

Arboretum

Distance: 3.35, 3.05, or 2.65 miles

Rating: III, rolling paved roads with light traffic

3.35 Mile Route

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L/R 0.0 L toward Eagle Nest Rd from the parking lot while facing the R Street gate; R onto Azaela Rd up the hill
0.95 Eagle Nest Rd on L; S becomes Crabtree Rd
1.0 road merges from L

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R 1.5 Hickey Hill Rd
1.7 Holly Spring Rd on L
1.95 Hickey Hill Overlook Rd on L
2.0 top of hill at Asian Garden parking
2.1 Dogwood Collection parking on R

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R 2.25 Conifer Rd (triangle X)
BL 2.4 bear L with road at Rd X on R
BL 2.65 Springhouse Rd on R (unmarked w/Do Not Enter sign)
R 2.7 Hickey Lane
2.95 Valley Rd on L; to NY Ave on R
L 3.35 into parking; R Street gate on R

*2.35 Mile Route

L 0.0 L toward Eagle Nest Rd from the parking lot while facing the R Street gate
0.05 Meadow Rd on L; Azalea Rd on R; S becomes Eagle Nest Rd

BL 0.25 to Crabtree Rd (unmarked); before Azaela Rd on R

BL 0.3 merge onto Crabtree Rd (unmarked) (pickup cues at mile 1.5 on 3.35 mile route)

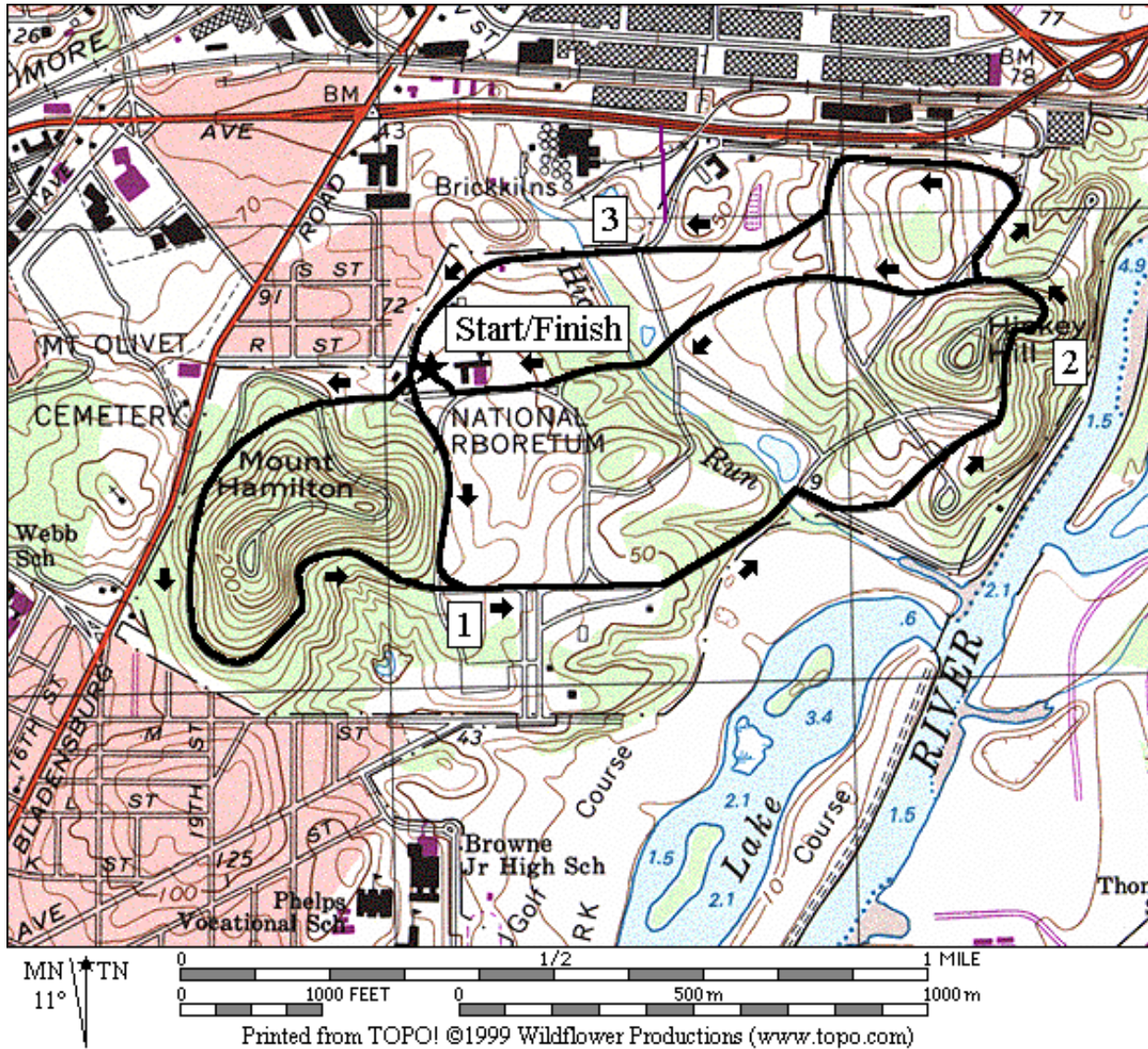
**3.05 Mile Route

2.25 Conifer Rd (triangle X) on R
2.3 Conifer Rd (triangle X) on R

BR 2.35 Meadow Rd (unmarked)
2.45 Holly Spring Rd
2.7 Valley Rd
2.85 Elipse Rd on L

BR 3.0 into Visitor Service Parking
3.05 parking & gate at R Street

Arboretum



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