

# Hollywood Cemetery Projects

The James River Garden Club (JRGC) has supported and collaborated with Hollywood Cemetery on a number of projects over the years. Hollywood Cemetery, designed in 1847 by noted architect John Notman of Philadelphia, is known as a garden cemetery, a landscape style that became popular in the 19th century. Located on the banks of the James River and one of Richmond's most visited places, the cemetery spans 135 acres of valleys and hills which are covered with heritage roses, stately trees, and other blooms that live up to the name of a garden cemetery. In 2017, Hollywood was named a recognized Arboretum as a tribute to its substantial focus on woody plants.

In 2010, the JRGC undertook the design of a Tree and Rose Map for Hollywood in celebration of the Garden Club of America (GCA) Centennial. Each GCA Club was challenged to undertake a "tree project" to commemorate this important milestone. The map continues to be a favorite tool for visitors to Hollywood Cemetery.

## New river overlooks planned for Hollywood Cemetery

By NED OLIVER Richmond Times-Dispatch Nov 4, 2015



Crosses frame a view of the Robert E. Lee Bridge from Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, VA Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2015.



Hollywood Cemetery — already a destination for great river views — is kicking off plans to build three stone overlooks above the James River.

"It's going to be a beautiful spot where you can really come and sit and enjoy the spectacular view," said Kelly Jones Wilbanks, the executive director of Friends of Hollywood Cemetery.

She said construction of the first overlook is scheduled to begin with a groundbreaking Friday, and work should be complete this spring.

The structure will include landscaping and "ample seating," she said. It's being designed by Van Yahres Studio of BCWH Architects.

Hollywood estimates all three overlooks will cost \$400,000, and the cemetery is raising funds for the project.

Hollywood has already received a \$25,000 grant from the Dominion Foundation's Environmental Stewardship Grant Program.

The James River Garden Club donated an additional \$50,000.

"We are so grateful to these organizations for supporting this worthwhile project," Wilbanks said. "When completed, we think the overlook will provide greater opportunities for the public to connect with the James River and to enjoy all the green space Hollywood provides."



## Historic Trees, Rose Bushes, and A New Map

The James River Garden Club of Richmond has informed the Cemetery of its interest in publishing a new map and guide to Hollywood trees and historic roses. Hollywood's stately trees authenticate the age and historical relevance of the Cemetery and are some of the most magnificent trees in the Richmond area.

The new publication will replace Hollywood Cemetery's Historic Tree and Rose Tour Map. Unlike the current brochure that includes all noteworthy trees in the Cemetery, the new fold-out map will feature 25 trees as well as each of the Cemetery's more than one dozen historic rose bushes.

The Club voted recently to move ahead with the project according to immediate past Club President Evie Scott. "Everyone is very enthusiastic. We want it to be very educational and informative, but simpler." The pamphlet will contain descriptive information about each tree and rose bush and be well suited for the casual visitor as well as the trained horticulturist and arborist. Scott expressed optimism that the pamphlet could be available by fall.

Each member club in the Garden Club of America has been tasked with undertaking a special project to commemorate G.C.A.'s 100th anniversary in 2013. The James River Club has selected the Hollywood tree and rose map as its project. "We are simply delighted with the Club's choice for a project," David Gilliam, Cemetery General Manager, said recently. "Our old map and guide became out of date the moment Hurricane Isabel ravaged the Cemetery in September 2003."

Isabel felled an unprecedented number of stately trees in the Richmond area. In the wake of its winds and cyclonic activity in Hollywood, Isabel left over 80 monarch and historic trees uprooted or too damaged to save.

Currently, the Cemetery is home to approximately 100 monarch and historic trees. The Cemetery's principal arborist, Van Yahres Free Company of Charlottesville, defines a monarch tree as one measuring 35 inches in diameter at breast height, a long-lived species, in good condition, structurally superior, and in a prominent location. An historic tree is one deemed noteworthy for its species and located along the blue line historic route. The new pamphlet will include monarch and historic trees, as well as a number of trees that are neither monarch nor historic but considered especially beautiful and unique.

Monarch and historic trees, as well as other important trees in the Cemetery, are part of a faithful evaluation and arbor care program that includes regularly scheduled inspection, trimming, repairing,



**Above and opposite:** Black Gum, *Nyssa sylvatica*, 45" diameter at breast height. One of the monarch trees that will be highlighted in the new fold-out map. With its brilliant red fall color and horizontal branching, the Black Gum is often considered Virginia's most beautiful native tree. This particular example, located on the hillside above Clark Springs Avenue, is so notable that it was featured in *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*, published in 2008.

**Habitat:** Mid to eastern US  
**Shape:** Horizontal branching  
**Special Interest:** Scarlet color in fall



The JRGC marked its own centennial in 2015 by sponsoring and working on the Hollywood Overlook Project. The overlooks are two stone terrace additions on either side of the Palmer Chapel which is situated on an elevated position overlooking the James River, the Kanawha canal and the downtown Richmond skyline. The Cemetery asked the JRGC to help develop and review proposed paving and planting plans for the site. The overlook terraces were designed to provide greater opportunities for the public to connect with the James River, to enjoy Hollywood's green spaces and provide a lovely, reflective area for visitors to enjoy. The project blended with JRGC's interests by incorporating conservation, education, historic tourism and civic planting and beautification to benefit the community.

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## *Hollywood Overlook*