

### SWEET BAY (*Laurus nobilis*) a.k.a bay laurel, bay, Grecian laurel, laurel



A native of the Mediterranean region, this evergreen tree or shrub has thick, waxy, fire-resistant leaves and is pest-resistant. It also deters pests from other nearby plants. Fresh or dried leaves are used in traditional Mediterranean cooking. Flavor releases slowly, thus the leaves are added to dishes that cook for a period of hours; the leaves are removed before serving. The laurel held an important place in classical Greek, Roman and Biblical cultures. The laurel wreath of Greece was a symbol of highest status; in Rome it was a symbol of victory, and it is the source of our expression "resting on one's laurels."

*Alongside the sweet bay is this tree...*

### ENGLISH OAK (*Quercus robur*) a.k.a. truffle or pedunculate oak



The English oak is possibly the best known and loved of British native trees. This deciduous, clay-tolerant, and drought-tolerant oak does not produce acorns for 20 to 40 years which this tree is now doing. Acorns are a valuable food for mammals and birds. The English oak has been a national emblem of strength and survival for centuries. It is on the reverse of the one pound coin (1987 and 1992). Druids worshipped under oak groves, and the Yule log was traditionally oak. One of the hardest, most durable timbers on the planet, it takes up to 150 years before the wood is ready for construction.

*Just ahead is Calle Aragon – cross this street carefully and continue the walk... On the left between manors 78 and 77 is a pair of these trees...*

### LIQUIDAMBAR (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) a.k.a. sweetgum



Liquidambar is native to eastern North America, parts of Mexico and Central America. A valuable hardwood forest tree and popular ornamental, it can live for 400 years. Those sharply pointed, five-lobed leaves display vibrant autumn colors of red, yellow, orange and purple. Seeds are contained in long-stemmed gum balls and fed upon by finches, nuthatches, chickadees, mourning doves and small mammals. Its resin was used to flavor the first pipe of tobacco shared by Aztec Emperor Montezuma and Cortez during ceremonies. The liquidambar can be tapped for its syrup in the same manner as the familiar maple tree.

*On the right is manor 82, at its far end are two of these trees...*

### EASTERN REDBUD (*Cercis canadensis*)



Native to eastern and central North America, this small, deciduous tree is much loved as an ornamental landscape tree. It blooms in early spring with showy light to dark magenta pink flowers growing in clusters on bare stems before leaves come out. New heart-shaped leaves are a reddish color, turn summer green, then a striking fall yellow. Native peoples ate the flowers and used them in meat and nut dishes. Twigs made excellent baskets and the wood was used for bows. George Washington transplanted forest seedlings into his Mount Vernon garden. The eastern redbud was second choice for our national tree... the oak won.

*On the left there is a grassy area with a carport at the far end. Looking toward the carport, the second tree from the main sidewalk is the...*

### BRISBANE BOX (*Lophostemon confertus*) a.k.a. brush box, pink box



Native to Australia, the Brisbane box grows along rainforest edges on the central coast of New South Wales and Queensland. Closely related to the eucalyptus, this tree is disease- and pest-resistant, and has a high tolerance for smog, drought and poor drainage. The Brisbane box is mainly used as a small, tough street tree. It was extensively planted around Pasadena and used as a street tree in San Francisco. It has small, white, starfish-shaped flowers in spring. Fruit capsules do not fall off the tree. They remain there looking like light-hearted, woody bouquets of fairy boxes on a stem.

*Walk slowly as you begin to pass manor 76 and see this tree on the left...*

### PHOTINIA (*Photinia fraseri*) a.k.a. red robin



This tree's natural range is warm, temperate Asia, but it is an ornamental that is widely cultivated throughout the world. Photinia is part of the rose family and related to the apple. It has fragrant white flowers and small, apple-shaped fruit used as food by birds, including thrushes, waxwings and starlings. There are about 40 to 60 species of this tree. Our tree carries the common name red robin because of the red color of new leaves contrasting with the dark evergreen older leaves. The scientific genus *Photinia* is derived from the Greek word *photeinos* (shiny) referring to the often glossy leaves.

*A few steps ahead on the right is a...*

### FLAX-LEAVED PAPERBARK (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) a.k.a. snow-in-summer



This tree is native to Australia where Aborigines inhaled the crushed leaves of this "tea tree" to treat coughs and colds, or sprinkled them on wounds they covered with a poultice. Today, the essential oil, tea tree oil (TTO), is obtained by steam distillation of leaves and terminal branches yielding a clear to pale yellow oil. It has many medicinal uses. Cleansing properties and pleasant scent allow TTO to be used in everything from home cleaning solutions to skin care. Trader Joe's Tea Tree Tingle bath and body products contain TTO, and are reported to have a fresh eucalyptus-mint scent.

*Continue walking past manor 76. Go up the hill and follow the path to where it divides around this huge tree...*

### INDIAN LAUREL FIG (*Ficus microcarpa* var. *nitida*) a.k.a. Chinese banyan



Native to Southeast Asia, it's one of the best shade trees, natural sound barrier and provider of privacy when pruned. A single tree could produce 100,000 fruit with about 150 seeds in each, but not without a special pollinating wasp visiting the flower inside the fig. No wasp means no little seedlings. It's best if seedlings do not develop as they have impressive root systems, which seem to grow anywhere: cracks on rocks, sidewalks, walls, pavements, roofs, etc. Adult trees are sometimes removed because of their invasive offspring and/or because of their own invasive roots.

*This is the end of the Serpentine Walk. Enjoy your return walk as you view the trees from a different perspective...*

If you want to research a specific tree, it's important to use the binomial name, i.e., the Latin for the genus and the species portion of its scientific name. Common names may vary from location to location, but the binomial name remains the same. All three Laguna Woods Village Tree Guides note the binomial name next to the common name for the tree. Our tree labels also cite this information.

*"The best friend on earth of man is the tree."*

—Frank Lloyd Wright

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The Aliso Creek, Friendship and Serpentine Walk Guides  
are available at the History Center

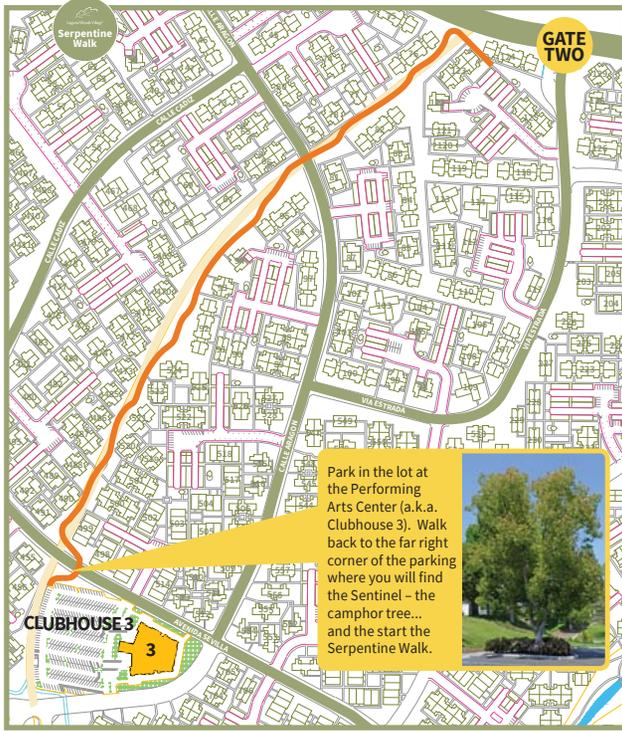
This guide is compliments of the  
History Center of Laguna Woods Village  
LagunaWoodsHistory.org



# Serpentine Walk



## TREE WALK GUIDE



### CAMPHOR TREE (*Cinnamomum camphora*) a.k.a. camphor laurel



Native to Japan and China, the camphor tree is an evergreen with blackberry-like fruit favored by birds. Young leaves and shoots can be boiled and eaten; wood and leaves are steam distilled for essential oils. These oils are used in baked goods, beverages and candy. Camphor oil is in Tiger Balm and Vicks VapoRub. Some camphors are the biggest-girthed trees in Japan, giants not found in forests, but found only in Shinto shrines of small towns. At least one of these giants promises a year longer of life for each time you circle it clockwise.

Look across Avenida Sevilla and see the Serpentine winding up the hill. Note the **NO PED CROSSING** sign. Follow its directions for crossing the street.

This is the third of our Vintage Walks. Beauty and adventure await on this lovely tree discovery walk. The walk is easy, taking less than an hour to stroll and take it all in.



Be sure to bring a bottle of water.



Wear good walking shoes and a hat.



Have fun! Take photos or notes. Look for wildlife too—birds, squirrels, butterflies and more!



As you walk up the hill, note this single tree on the left...

### DEODAR CEDAR (*Cedrus deodara*) a.k.a. Himalayan cedar



Native to South Asia and the Middle East, the word deodar is derived from Hindi and Sanskrit words, and means “Wood of the Gods.” This tree is worshiped by Hindus as a divine tree, prized for its medicinal purposes and its aromatic wood. The outer bark and stem are used for making astringent; its inner wood is used to make incense. The heartwood oil is used as an herbal approach to obesity management. Being durable and rot-resistant, deodar historically was, and still is, used for building and landscaping of temples. It can live 1,000 years. As you continue walking, notice the tall pine trees lining both sides of the path. These are the...

### CANARY ISLAND PINE (*Pinus canariensis*)



Native to the Canary Islands of Spain, the Canary Island pine is one of the most fire-resistant conifers in the world. Also one of the most drought tolerant of the pines, its deep roots make it desirable for lawns. Its canopy allows light to filter through, providing dappled shade. Long needles trap condensation that eventually drips down to the soil, replenishing the aquifer. Long lived, this pine grows fast: 24 to 36 inches per year. The trunk has tiny branches and tufts of needles (epicormic growth), usually associated with abnormal stress in other trees, but seems to be normal for the Canary Island pine. Walk to manor 485 on your left. At its near corner is the...

### WHITE ALDER (*Alnus rhombifolia*)



Native to western North America, this beautiful tree is found along water courses or right in a stream. Native Americans made red dye from the bark, using it in their baskets, and for the strong teas used in their sweatshouses. The Spanish name for alder is *aliso*. Explorers moored their ships off the mouth of Aliso Creek, cutting large timbers there. In Spanish mission time, these trees were used for construction. All are gone from the creek now, but it's probable that the white Alder is that same species of tree. At the far corner of manor 485, see the very tall...

### LONDON PLANE (*Platanus x acerifolia*) a.k.a. London plane tree



Native to England, this tree's smooth-faced leaves shed rain, removing all trace of London's dust and soot. The peeling bark-plates also carried off pollutants, important benefits still highly valued today in this widely planted street tree. Seeds are dispersed by wind shaking the suspended “bobbles,” which remain on the tree. The mottled appearance of the plane tree's bark was the inspiration for Germany's first dotted camouflage pattern circa World War II. *Platanus* trees are among those susceptible to the polyphagous shot hole borer, with no known treatment. The tree you see here, unlike many in our village, has not been affected as yet. Next on the left is manor 473 with this tree at its far side...

### CRAPE MYRTLE (*Lagertroemia indica*)



Native to China and Korea, this ornamental shade tree provides filtered light, and also is used as a shrub. Often called the “lilac of the South,” where they are now widely spread, the species was introduced to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1790. Crape myrtles are known for colorful, long-lasting flowers, from deep purple to white and everything in between. The spelling of crape is sometimes confusing: crape versus crepe. Both are correct. The American Horticultural Society uses crape, as does the Arbor Day Foundation. Crape myrtle is one of our village's most numerous and colorful trees. On the right is manor 92 with this tree across from the manor's number sign (92)...

### FERN PINE (*Afrocarpus gracilior*)



This pine is important as a timber tree in its native Africa, where it's harvested for local use and export. The wood is used for building construction and furniture. This beautiful tree can also be pruned as a hedge. Mature fleshy seeds are dispersed by the birds and animals that eat them. It's often planted in the church compounds of Ethiopia to provide shade and shelter to congregations. Deforestation rather than logging appears to be a major threat to this species. The fern pine is common throughout southern California as an ornamental shade tree. Here in Laguna Woods, birds nest in these trees. On the left see manor 469 with this tree...

### SILK OAK (*Grevillea robusta*) a.k.a. silky oak in Australia



Native to Australia and brought to California by Australians during the Gold Rush, the silk oak is a common landscaping tree in Southern California. In Australia, its wood is best known for cabinet timbers and for fencing due to rot-resistance. South Africa grows this valuable timber tree on plantations. There are severe restrictions for harvesting the silk oak, whose numbers are dwindling. In Laguna Woods, you can view the silk oak's display of orange to yellow flowers from April to May. Hummingbirds love these nectar producing, petal-less, often horizontal and up to foot-long blooms. On the right of manor 94 is this tree...

### STONE PINE (*Pinus pinea*) a.k.a. Italian stone pine, umbrella pine



Native to the Mediterranean region, the stone pine has been cultivated since prehistoric times for its pine nuts for eating as well as for trade. Today, we call them pignoli nuts. Of all pine nuts, this one has the highest percent of protein (34%). Stone pines are seen lining ancient Roman roads including the Appian Way. In the 1700s, they were introduced to Mediterranean climate regions around the world. Read the labels on those small potted pines sold during the Christmas season... chances are good you will discover a little stone pine. On the left, across from the stone pine, is a pair of...

### MANNA GUM (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) a.k.a. ribbon gum, white gum



This tree is native to Australia and known to hybridize with more than 20 other eucalypts. The bark peels in large ribbons. It's named for the sweet gum that oozes from insect-eaten leaves and damaged bark. The gum was eaten by aboriginal Australians. Older leaves were laid on bonfires for smoke believed to reduce fever, bark was used for shields, flowers were used in magic and trunk burls were made into drinking vessels. This is “the” koala tree. Some manna gum woodlands are rapidly declining and the cause is unknown. This creates concern about possible starvation of the koala. On the right at the far end of manor 95 is...