

Royal Oak Arboretum

The Royal Oak Arboretum is located at the southeast corner of Lexington Blvd and Marais. Before the middle of 2016, the park was known as Worden Park East. The park surrounds the Royal Oak Senior Center on three sides. The park is 4 ¼ acres in size, which includes playgrounds, tended gardens, grassy areas, open areas with mature over-story trees and ornamental trees and shrubs and a two-acre wooded area. It was once a part of the Goodwin Farm (the Goodwin's were the original owners of the land now



Royal Oak Arboretum Meadow area

known as Tenhave Woods) through the mid 1800's, before being sold. A topographical survey from 1969 shows it as a young woodlot. The dominant species were mostly maple and ash, with some cherry, elm, oak, hickory, poplar, and hawthorn present as well. There were some native understory plants such as: Swamp Avens, Tovara, Bishop's Cap, and Heath Aster also located there. Ornamental trees were added after the park's inception (October 1956) such as: willow, sweetgum, dogwood, apple, and vernal witch hazel.

When the Nature Society first toured the area in 2001, it was already being taken over by invasive species, primarily common buckthorn, Asian bush honeysuckle, Garlic mustard and English ivy. After 2001, the problem continued to worsen. Much of the flora was invasive noxious weeds until eradication work began around 2008.

Arboretum Startup:

Around 2006, a long-range plan for an arboretum was made to create a collection of native plants that were not found in Tenhave Woods. In 2008, The Royal Oak Nature Society began restoring the native plant community in what is now known as the Royal Oak Arboretum. The Nature Society's first efforts in the arboretum focused on identifying and preserving native trees and shrubs and removing invasive species including ones mentioned above. The removal of these plants has been carried out by the Nature Society, Eagle Scout Project work crews and various conservation/community groups.

Arboretum Accomplishments/Projects to Date:

- Fall 2006: The City installed a 5-foot-wide concrete path through the woods with funding from a Community Development Block Grant.
- April 2007: Wildflowers in the middle of Tenhave paths were moved to cement walkway edge of Arboretum
- April 2008 Eagle Scout Project: Buckthorn removal
- May 2008: the Nature Society planted native Michigan wildflowers and woody plants along the paved path with a grant from the Wildflower Association of Michigan.
- September 2008: Arboretum Service Project Buckthorn removal
- November 2009: Buckthorn removal & 7 species of native savanna plants were seeded in 3 openings.
- Winter 2009/10: RONS Board members plan & design the first three native plant community gardens – Oak Savanna, MI Tree collection, & Wet Prairie Rain Garden.
- April 2010: 5 woodland and 10 meadow natives donated from Nature Society members included blue phlox.
- May & September 2010: 10 native trees planted, and Oak Savanna area weeded & prepared for planting.
- May & October 2010: over 200 wildflowers donated to RONS Arboretum by Southeast Michigan Wild Ones members & native gardeners planted.
- Summer 2010: The City of Royal Oak installed a spigot to use to water plants in the arboretum.
- September 2010: Eagle Scout cuts buckthorn, honeysuckle, tags trees & improves trails.
- October 2010: Installed 50 native plants
- November 2010: 25 Volunteers from Wild Ones and SOCWA cut 1 acre of mature & sapling buckthorn, 3 apply herbicide, & 2 spread a mix of Oak savanna wildflower seed.
- April 2011: Dug out area for rain garden & installed plants in that garden
- May 2011: Built some new trails & lined with logs as part of an Eagle Scout project
- May 2011: Planted 11 native trees, 14 native shrubs & over 100 native wildflowers
- June 2011: Added 100 Oak Openings wildflowers & 10 woody plants
- July 2011: Planted 25 sunflowers, a few Aralia & a couple of shrubs
- September 2011: Planted 15 native trees & shrubs, and sowed prairie & savanna species' seed
- October 2011: Installed 200 plants donated from Oakland Wildflower Farm
- November 2011: Removed Buckthorn
- November 2011: A shed to keep our equipment & supplies was installed next to the northeast corner of the Senior Center Building.
- November 2011: Woodchips were added to the trails as part of an Eagle Scout project
- May 2012: Native wildflower planting
- November 2013: Two benches were installed in the meadow area as part of an Eagle Scout Project
- October 2015: Cleared out the remaining buckthorn from the meadow to Lexington, west of the cement sidewalk.
- November 2015: Birdfeeder was installed in the meadow area
- September & October 2016: Six inches of woodchips were laid down on the trails
- Beginning in December 2016, the bird feeder located in the meadow area was filled up about every two weeks and continued to do so up thru March.

- May 2017: Troop 1627 Eagle Scout Project lead by James Richards, created & lined mushroom garden trail with logs, put up trail signs, planted 12 native tree saplings in different areas of the arboretum, put up protective wire around them.
- October 2017: Ten yards of wood chips were added to the Mushroom Garden trail. Seven native trees were planted in different areas. Two bird houses on metal poles were also installed.
- May 2020: Trees added include 3 Smooth Sumac; 2 pumpkin Ash; 2 Black Ash; 2 Peachleaf Willows; 2 Tamarack; 1 Balsam Poplar; 1 Black Willow; 1 Choke Cherry; 1 White Cedar
- July 2021: Rebuilt rain garden located near the northeast corner of the Senior Center.

What would make the Royal Oak Arboretum special?

This will be a manageable and unique, local arboretum. We can't plant anything in Tenhave because it is a nature area. But by adding native trees that we presently do not have in Tenhave to the arboretum, the Nature Society can attempt to build a collection of all of Michigan's native trees. As of July 2016, we have 65 native tree species in Tenhave/Arboretum and 5 in our nursery. That leaves only 16 native trees that we need to get in order to have all 86 native Michigan trees.

Creating & maintaining the arboretum:

We are continuing to collect and care for the native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, native grasses, and sedges that will fit into a unique local native plant arboretum – one based on the deciduous forest and savanna/meadow communities of southeast Michigan.

We Need Your Help as a Gardner:

The Nature Society is actively seeking help with gardening in the arboretum. Our garden crew works in the arboretum between May and September. Weeds are removed from the trails and other parts of the park, mulch is added where necessary, invasive species are removed, and plants are watered if needed. For more information on helping us with the gardening, you can e-mail us at naturesociety@romi.gov.

Our Overall Goal:

We wish to offer our visitors a window to the many varieties of native species that can be enjoyed throughout the year. We hope you enjoy your walk through our arboretum and hopefully learn or see something interesting in each plant community! The arboretum will eventually add to our ability to teach about our area's ecosystems and encourage residents to use native plants which are beneficial to the environment, around their homes.

Since we began developing the Royal Oak Arboretum in 2008, we have planted the following:

PLANTED IN THE ARBORETUM MEADOW AREA

Woodland Grasses, Sedges and Rushes

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Hairy Wood Chess | Crested Sedge | Long-beaked Sedg |
| Silky Wild Rye | Fowl Manna Grass | Path Rush |

Woodland Forbs

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Canada Thimbleweed | Green Dragon | Heart-leaved Aster |
| Short's Aster | Bellflower | White Snakeroot |
| Wild Geranium | Woodland Sunflower | Hepatica |
| Canada Waterleaf | VA Bluebells | Foxglove Beardtongue |
| Golden Glow | Brown-eyed Susan | Late Figwort |
| False Solomon's Seal | Blue-stemmed Goldenrod | Common Spiderwort |
| Longspur Violet | Golden Alexander | |

Woodland Shrubs

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Arrowwood Viburnum | Black Chokeberry | Buttonbush |
| Common Elderberry | Michigan Holly | Common Witch-Hazel |
| Fragrant Sumac | Mapleleaf Viburnum | Meadowsweet |
| Nannyberry | New Jersey Tea | Ninebark |
| Redosier Dogwood | Spicebush | Shrubby Cinquefoil |
| Shrubby St. John's | | |

Savanna Native Grasses

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Big Bluestem Grass | Canada Wild Rye | Bottlebrush Grass | Indian Grass |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|

Savanna Native Wildflowers

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Thimbleweed | Butterfly Weed | New England Aster |
| Columbine | White False Indigo | Tall Coreopsis |
| Showy Tick Trefoil | Flowering Spurge | Woodland Sunflower |
| Wild Lupin | Bergamot Bee Balm | Evening Primrose |
| Yellow Coneflower | Black-eyed Susan | Tall Goldenrod |
| Lance-leaved Goldenrod | Stiff Goldenrod | Tall Meadowrue |
| Culver's Root | Ironweed | Golden Alexanders |

PLANTED IN THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Blue-eyed Grass | Golden Alexanders | Heath Aster |
| Early Meadow Rue | Blazing Star | Vervain |
| Cup Plant | Joe-Pye | Blue-eyed Grass |
| Rattlesnake Master | Monkeyflower | Blue Lobelia |
| Old-field Goldenrod | Gray's Sedge | Heath Aster |
| Grass-leaved Goldy | Slender Mountain Mint | Wild Geranium |
| Wild strawberry | Nodding Wild Onion | |

The Butterfly Garden is located along the east edge at the north end of the Senior Center parking lot