

Bottlebrush Buckeye, no. 10. Drawn by William Bartram for the *Travels*, 1791, as “Aesculus polygama”

KEEP EXPLORING

Take it outside

The Station’s interactive map shows every Bartram plant on a topographic basemap, with photographs and plant details. Open it on a phone while you walk.

INTERACTIVE MAP

Every plant, with photographs

Scan the code, or begin at
highlandsbiological.org

Plant notes draw on Jim Costa’s text for the original Bartram Walk pamphlet, with map and layout by Leslie Costa, and on the Bartram Walk Guide. The walk was reformatted in 2026 by Liam Stiefel. Financial support for the Highlands Botanical Gardens comes from Western Carolina University, the Highlands Biological Foundation, Inc., grants, donations and proceeds from annual events.

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HIGHLANDS BOTANICAL GARDENS

The Bartram Walk

Plants the Bartrams knew, and where to find them



A COMPANION TO THE TRAIL GUIDE

Pitcher plants. William Bartram, ink on paper, 1801

THE WALK

Plants with a story

Mountain and piedmont species that John Bartram or his son William saw, collected, drew or named.

In the spring of 1775, William Bartram of Philadelphia traveled through the Cherokee country of western North Carolina and the uplands of Georgia and South Carolina. He spent only a couple of months in these mountains. His account of their plants, animals and people, published in 1791 as the *Travels*, has held readers ever since.

William was the son of John Bartram, a Quaker farmer and self-taught botanist whose plant collecting earned him the title of royal botanist from King George III. William came to botany after several failed business ventures. On his southern journey the Seminoles named him Puc Puggy, the Flower Hunter.

This walk follows the two of them through the gardens in plants. Each stop carries a note on what the Bartrams saw, wrote or did.

“The flaming azalea abounds and illuminates the hillsides.”

WILLIAM BARTRAM, MAY 1775

THE BARTRAMS

John Bartram (1699–1777). Farmer, botanist and explorer. Founder of Bartram’s Garden in Philadelphia.

William Bartram (1739–1823). Botanist, horticulturist and explorer. He traveled the American South from 1773 to 1777 and reached the Southern Appalachians in the spring of 1775.

ONE TO FIND

The Franklin Tree

Franklinia alatamaha · no. 9, Duplex Garden

John and William Bartram found this tree on the Altamaha River in Georgia in 1765. It is now extinct in the wild, and every Franklin Tree alive today grows in a garden.

HOW TO WALK IT

Open the guide to the map. Each of the thirty plants has a number, the same one it carries on the Station’s interactive map. Find a number on the map, then read its note in the list beside it.

Most of the plants grow between the Nature Center and Lindenwood Lake. Take them in any order, in one visit or several.

Some are easier to spot than others, and their season matters: a spring wildflower may be only leaves by August.

ONE ABSENCE

The Venus Fly-trap, no. 3, is not growing in the gardens at present. It keeps its place on the list for the story it carries.



Franklinia. Drawn by William Bartram, engraved by J. Trenchard, for the *Travels*, 1791

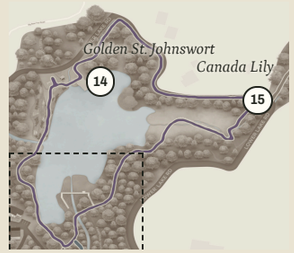
The gardens are a living museum of labeled plant specimens. Please stay on the marked trails, and do not pick or remove any plant material.

FIND EACH BY ITS NUMBER

Thirty plants the Bartrams knew

Each number marks a plant in the list at right. North is at the top of the map.

BEYOND THE WALK



Numbers 14 and 15 grow by the lake. The dashed line marks the area of the large map.



Oakleaf Hydrangea, no. 7. Engraved for the *Travels*, 1791

PLANT BY PLANT

What the Bartrams saw

1. **Fraser Magnolia** *Magnolia fraseri* WOODLAND WAY
   Bartram described it in 1775 and named a peak "Mount Magnolia" for it.
2. **Fringe Tree** *Chionanthus virginicus* WILDFLOWER GARDEN
3. **Venus Fly-trap** *Dionaea muscipula*
   John Bartram sent specimens to Peter Collinson in London in 1763.
4. **Trumpet Honeysuckle** *Lonicera sempervirens* AMPHITHEATER
   One of William Bartram's "sweet roving climbers."
5. **Flame Azalea** *Rhododendron calendulaceum* DUPLEX GARDEN
   "The flaming azalea abounds and illuminates the hillsides," Bartram wrote in May 1775.
6. **Sweet Azalea** *Rhododendron arborescens* WOODLAND WAY
   John Bartram probably discovered it; the Bartrams introduced it to England about 1818.
7. **Oakleaf Hydrangea** *Hydrangea quercifolia* DUPLEX GARDEN
   William Bartram discovered it on July 4, 1775, in Georgia and is credited with naming it.
8. **Chickasaw Plum** *Prunus angustifolia* DUPLEX GARDEN
   Bartram saw it only in old, abandoned Native American fields.
9. **Franklin Tree** *Franklinia alatamaha* DUPLEX GARDEN
   John and William Bartram found it on the Altamaha River in 1765; it is now extinct in the wild.
10. **Bottlebrush Buckeye** *Aesculus parviflora* DUPLEX GARDEN
11. **Wild Strawberry** *Fragaria virginiana*
    Bartram wrote repeatedly of "fragrant" strawberry fields along the trail.
12. **Painted Buckeye** *Aesculus sylvatica* PARKING AREA BUCKEYES
    Probably the new buckeye Bartram met in the South Carolina upstate in May 1775.
13. **Black Oak** *Quercus velutina* ETHNOBOTANICAL GARDEN
    Bartram measured black oaks up to eleven feet across near Wrightsboro, Georgia.
14. **Golden St. Johnswort** *Hypericum frondosum*
    William Bartram found it in Georgia in July 1775; André Michaux later received the naming credit.
15. **Canada Lily** *Lilium canadense*
16. **Pitcher Plants** *Sarracenia spp.* BOG GARDEN
    Purple pitcher plant and mountain sweet pitcher plant. William Bartram was first to point out correctly that pitcher leaves trap insects.
17. **Swamp Pink** *Helonias bullata* BOG GARDEN
    Linnaeus named it in 1753 from specimens that likely came from John Bartram.
18. **Mountain Camellia** *Stewartia ovata* BOG GARDEN
    Bartram recognized it as a new species near Station Mountain, South Carolina.
19. **Piedmont Rhododendron** *Rhododendron minus* WILDFLOWER GARDEN
    William Bartram found it at Augusta, Georgia, in April 1775; Michaux named it in 1792.
20. **River Cane** *Arundinaria gigantea* HISTORIC GARDENS
    Bartram often described the vast canebrakes of the South.
21. **Sweetshrub** *Calycanthus floridus* ETHNOBOTANICAL GARDEN
    Bartram mentioned it eleven times in the Travels, praising its "perfumed" groves.
22. **Turk's Cap Lily** *Lilium superbum* HISTORIC GARDENS
23. **Dutchman's Pipe** *Aristolochia macrophylla* HISTORIC GARDENS
    In 1775 Bartram admired the way it rambles over trees and shrubs along mountain brooks.
24. **Netted Chain Fern** *Woodwardia areolata*
25. **Apple Moss** *Bartramia pomiformis* MOSS GARDEN
    Johann Hedwig named the moss genus Bartramia for John Bartram.
26. **Indian Pink** *Spigelia marilandica* HOMEOWNER DEMO GARDEN
27. **Great Blue Lobelia** *Lobelia siphilitica* HOMEOWNER DEMO GARDEN
28. **Golden-seal** *Hydrastis canadensis* WOODLAND WAY
    William's drawing of it led Peter Collinson to ask John Bartram for a plant in 1759.
29. **Grape Vine** *Vitis sp.* WOODLAND WAY
    Bartram marveled at wild grape vines up to a foot thick.
30. **Partridge Berry** *Mitchella repens*