

Arkansas State Capitol Self Guided Grounds Tour



Secretary of State
John Thurston



JOHN THURSTON

ARKANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE

I'm pleased to provide A Walk on the Hill, a self-guided tour of the beautiful grounds of the Arkansas State Capitol.

As Secretary of State, one of my most cherished responsibilities is the care of the building and surrounding grounds. I take utmost pride in preserving it for future generations to enjoy.

Whether you're a frequent visitor or a newcomer to the Capitol, I hope you'll take time to walk through the grounds and enjoy the scenery and heritage. The surroundings have been designed to combine beauty and historical remembrance with landscaping, memorials and even picnic areas.

Taking a short time to tour this gem of Arkansas will give you a new perspective on the State Capitol and what goes on within it. This is your Capitol; these are your grounds. I hope you'll enjoy them.

Thousands of visitors from across the nation and around the world tour Arkansas's historic State Capitol each year, admiring the majestic building. But like any jewel, the setting is an important part of the whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Thurston".

John Thurston
Arkansas Secretary of State



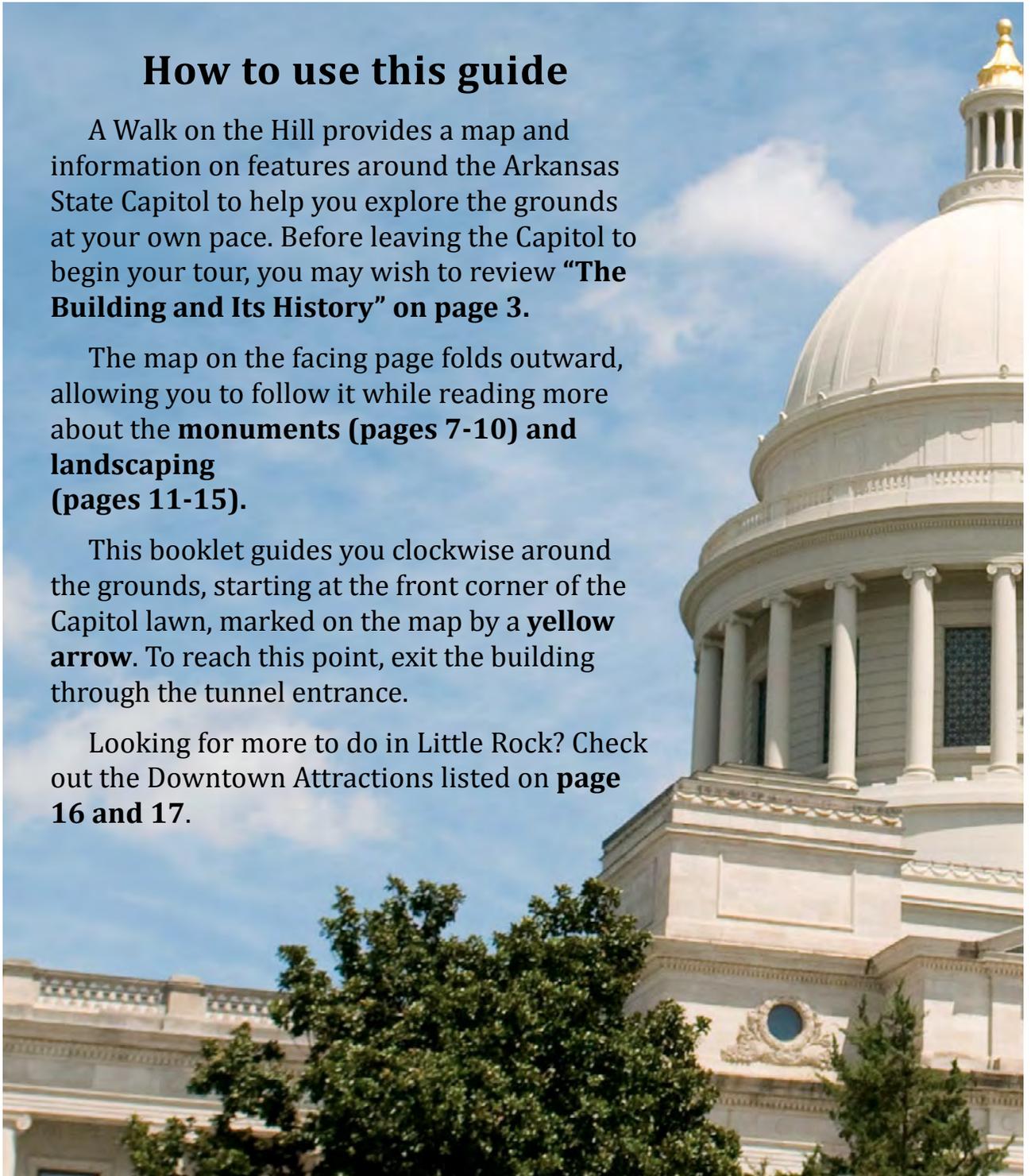
How to use this guide

A Walk on the Hill provides a map and information on features around the Arkansas State Capitol to help you explore the grounds at your own pace. Before leaving the Capitol to begin your tour, you may wish to review **“The Building and Its History” on page 3.**

The map on the facing page folds outward, allowing you to follow it while reading more about the **monuments (pages 7-10) and landscaping (pages 11-15).**

This booklet guides you clockwise around the grounds, starting at the front corner of the Capitol lawn, marked on the map by a **yellow arrow.** To reach this point, exit the building through the tunnel entrance.

Looking for more to do in Little Rock? Check out the Downtown Attractions listed on **page 16 and 17.**



The Building and Its History

Creating Arkansas's Centerpiece

The Arkansas State Capitol was built in the early 20th century (1899-1915) to accommodate a growing state government and a steadily expanding capital city. In its early days, Little Rock grew mainly east and south of the Arkansas River and the construction of the elegant State House on Markham Street reflected the activity center for the bustling, but small capital city.

In 1839, the state purchased 92 acres of land west of the city for use as the state's first prison. The site was a low hill just visible from the State House. When Union troops captured Little Rock in 1863, they used the prison as a federal military jail, holding captured Confederate soldiers and civilian sympathizers. After the Civil War, the penitentiary once again became a civil prison.

The prison had grown by the end of the 19th century, and so had Little Rock. When the prison was built in 1839, it was isolated outside the then-small capital city. By 1899, it was surrounded on three sides with homes, and more were planned. In the spring of 1899, Governor Daniel Jones proposed that the site be converted to the new state capitol building, authorized by the 32nd Legislative Assembly.

Ground for the new Capitol was broken on July 4, 1899. Over the next 17 months, the Capitol's basement was excavated and the foundation constructed, mostly by convict labor under the supervision of Capitol Commissioner George Donaghey. This work was completed by Thanksgiving 1900, when about 40,000 dignitaries and spectators watched as the Capitol's cornerstone was laid. (For a glimpse of the cornerstone, look through the masonry railing at the northeast corner of the Capitol's ground level, below the Governor's office.) Completion of the building required another 14 years, more than \$2 million, a new architect, and a governor, George Donaghey, who campaigned on a plan to finish construction.

Design and Features of the State Capitol

Nearly a century later, the Arkansas State Capitol complex has grown to include almost 40 acres of facilities and grounds.

The neoclassical style of the building is a common style found in monumental architecture of the early 20th century. The ground floor is 440 feet long and 190 feet wide. The walls and parapet (railing along the roof) rise about 80 feet above ground level.

When it authorized the construction of the Capitol, the state legislature urged Arkansas materials to be used wherever possible. Limestone was used for the exterior walls – Indiana limestone for the ground floor walls, and a hard limestone from near Batesville, Arkansas, for the upper stories and the fireplace mantles in the Governor's Reception Room. Indiana limestone was also used for the dome, which was erected in the latter half of 1910.

The Capitol's dome rises 213 feet above ground level. Governor George Donaghey suggested to the building's second architect, Cass Gilbert, that a dome similar to the one on Mississippi's capitol might suit this building's neoclassical style. Gilbert agreed and obtained permission from Mississippi's architect, Theodore Link, to replicate the dome. Ironically, few people realized until the 1930s that Mississippi's dome had been designed by George Mann, the original architect of the Arkansas State Capitol.

The dome is topped with a lantern-style cupola, and capped with a ball finial, which is a hollow copper sphere. It and the supporting rooftop are gilded in 23-karat gold leaf, an extremely thin gold foil, which is reapplied by hand when needed. The last application was in the 1990s.

Restoration

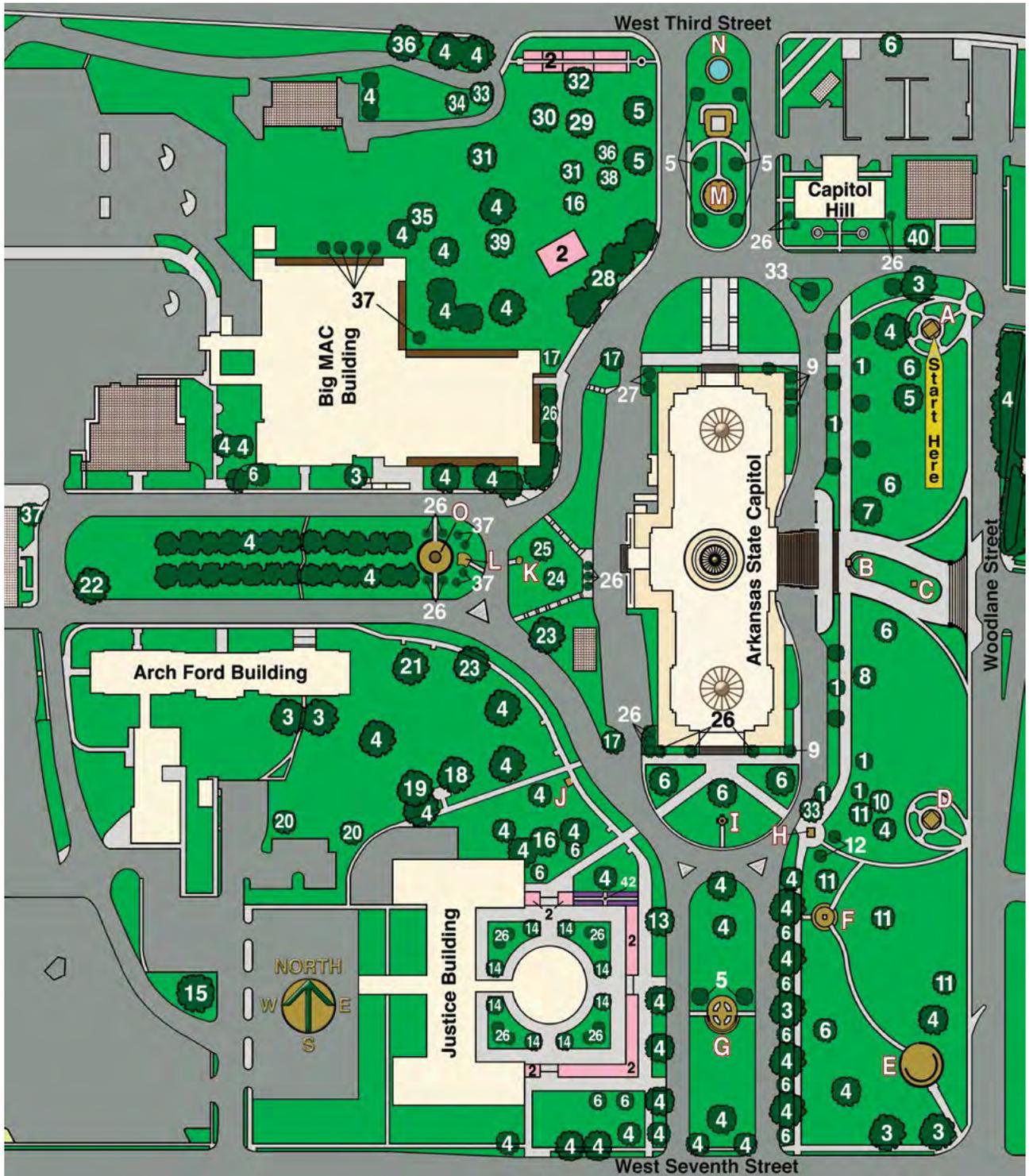
From 2005 to 2006, the dome was extensively cleaned and resealed through a grant from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Commission. The restoration of the Capitol building also includes cleaning and repointing the building's façade, which is being completed in phases as additional grants are awarded.

The Capitol is not perpendicular to Capitol Avenue, its main approach from the east. It was constructed on a north-south orientation, with the vertical axis of the Capitol aligned with the center of Fifth Street, (which is now Capitol Avenue), while Little Rock streets follow the curving Arkansas River to the north. Renovated in 2004, the curved Grand Promenade visually connects the building to the street. The pedestal lighting and landscape themes in front of the Capitol reflect the architects' original vision, and even curbs at the sides of the promenade were cast to match the intended profile.

Surrounding Structures

In the 1960s the state purchased a building known as "The Rackensack Apartments," north of the Capitol. Built in the 1920s, the structure, now called Capitol Hill, continues to provide legislators' housing and overflow office space. Today, buildings along the west mall include a multi-agency complex known as "Big MAC" and facilities for education divisions.





Monuments

- A. Monument to Confederate Soldiers
- B. C.G. "Crip" Hall and
- C. Kelly Bryant Markers
- D. Monument to Confederate Women
- E. Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- F. Medal of Honor Memorial
- G. Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial
- H. War of 1812 Memorial Fountain
- I. The Eternal Flame
- J. War Prisoners' Marker
- K. Bauxite Boulder
- L. Granite Mountain Boulder
- M. Testament: The Little Rock Nine Salute
- N. American Revolution Bicentennial Monument & Fountain
- O. Arkansas Firefighters Memorial

Trees

(Read more about the trees in **green** beginning on page 11.)

- 11. Japanese Magnolia
- 12. Purpleleaf Plum
- 13. American Elm§
- 14. Willow Oak*
- 15. Shumard Oak*
- 16. Southern Magnolia
- 17. Eastern Red Cedar
- 18. Slash Pine
- 19. Japanese Maple
- 10. Tulip Tree
- 11. Loblolly Pine
- 12. Sweetbay Magnolia
- 13. Siberian Elm§
- 14. Kentucky Coffee Tree
- 15. Sweetgum
- 16. American Holly
- 17. Red Maple
- 18. Water Oak*
- 19. Post Oak*
- 20. Cedar Elm§
- 21. Bur Oak*
- 22. Southern Red Oak*
- 23. Cherrybark Oak*
- 24. Basswood
- 25. Lilac Chaste-Tree
- 26. Crape Myrtle
- 27. Yoshino Cherry
- 28. Sugar Maple
- 29. Green Ash
- 30. Red Mulberry
- 31. Pin Oak*
- 32. Dawn Redwood
- 33. Ginkgo
- 34. Shortleaf Pine
- 35. Black Walnut
- 36. Sycamore
- 37. Dogwood
- 38. Sawtooth Oak*
- 39. American Holly
- 40. Live Oak*
- 41. Hackberry
- Capitol Rose Gardens
- The Iris Garden

*See "Oak Varieties" information on p. 12

§See "Elm Varieties" information on p. 12

Monuments and Memorials

The Capitol was originally designed to be a handsome state office building. As the seat of state government, it is a natural setting for memorials to groups, individuals and events. Several monuments and memorial trees have been placed on the grounds over the decades. Since 2004, restoration and construction have restored the grounds, monuments, and much of the building to their original appearances.

Begin your tour at the Monument to Confederate Soldiers, marked by the yellow arrow on the map, **page 5**.

(A) Monument to Confederate Soldiers

This monument is located on the northeast corner of the Capitol grounds. Designed by Frederick W. Ruckstuhl and dedicated in 1905, this memorial was underwritten by the State of Arkansas, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the United Confederate Veterans, the Sons of Confederate Veterans and private donations. It was originally placed immediately in front of the Capitol's east face, but was relocated soon after construction was completed. In 2004 the monument was cleaned, its base repaired and the surrounding landscaping reconfigured to resemble its early appearance.



(B) C.G. "Crip" Hall and (C) Kelly Bryant Markers

Two small markers within the grand promenade landscape pay homage to two long-time Secretaries of State. C.G. "Crip" Hall served from 1937 to 1961 and set a standard of service for modern-era secretaries. His successor, Kelly Bryant, served from 1962 to 1975 and died while holding the office.

(D) Monument to Confederate Women

Located on the southeast lawn, this memorial was designed by J. Otto Schweitzer and dedicated in 1913. It was underwritten by the State of Arkansas and the United Confederate Veterans. In 2004 the monument was cleaned, its base repaired and features of its original landscaping restored.





(E) Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Situated at the southeast corner of the Capitol grounds, this solemn memorial was proposed by the General Assembly in 1983 and was dedicated in 1987. The central figure of a soldier was sculpted by artist John Deering. The granite monument bears the names of over 400 Arkansans killed or mortally wounded during the conflict in Vietnam.

(F) Medal of Honor Memorial

In 1996, a commission was organized to facilitate the construction of a monument honoring Arkansas's 25 Congressional Medal of Honor holders. The memorial, designed by artist John Deering, was dedicated on November 18, 2000. Its central figure is a bronze eagle, surrounded by memorials to Congressional Medal recipients who served in conflicts ranging from the Civil War to Vietnam.



(G) Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial

Dedicated in 1994, this quiet shrine recalls Arkansas lawmen and women who have lost their lives in the line of duty. It is located on the mall south of the Capitol. A memorial service is held here in May each year.

(H) War of 1812 Memorial Fountain

Many veterans of the War of 1812 received land grants in Arkansas Territory, awarded for their service. An obelisk crowned by a round stone memorializes 56 such veterans who are buried in Arkansas. Located near the southeast corner of the Capitol, this monument was dedicated in 1917. It was refurbished in 2003-2004 and restored as a drinking fountain.





(I) The Eternal Flame

This simple structure stands just south of the Capitol. Symbolizing the “Spirit of Freedom,” the flame memorializes the founders of the American Legion and that organization’s 50th anniversary. The flame was first lit on July 11, 1969. The monument was restored in 2004.



(J) War Prisoners' Marker

During the Civil War, both Union and Confederate prisoners were held on these grounds in the then-state prison. This simple, undated marker is opposite the southwest corner of the Capitol, installed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in memory of soldiers on both sides of that war who were imprisoned here.



(K) Bauxite Boulder

Located west of the Capitol, across the street from the Granite Mountain Boulder (L), this rock symbolizes the aluminum industry, long an economic mainstay and one of the state’s most significant contributions during World War II. The boulder was installed in 1943 during the administration of Governor Homer Adkins.

(L) Granite Mountain Boulder

This hefty marker, located at the head of the Capitol Mall west of the building, commemorates a century of Arkansas’s statehood. It was quarried from Granite Mountain, about five miles away, and placed on the Capitol grounds by Governor J. Marion Futrell, with the participation of former Governor George W. Donaghey. Both men signed the concrete walk in front of the boulder.





(M) Arkansas Fallen Firefighters Memorial

Dedicated in 2014, this memorial recalls Arkansas firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The memorial features three bronze firefighters, a water feature and accent lighting.

(M) Testament: The Little Rock Nine Monument

In 1957, nine African-American students enrolled at Little Rock's Central High School, beginning the process of desegregating Little Rock's public schools and marking a seminal event in America's civil rights movement. This sculptural grouping was dedicated in August 2005 to honor the courage of those students, known collectively as the Little Rock Nine. Quotations from each of the Nine are featured around the bronze figures, which are the work of artists John and Cathy Deering.



(N) American Revolution Bicentennial

Monument and Fountain On the north mall stands an elegant travertine canopy, sheltering a replica of the Liberty Bell. The bell is one of 50 distributed to the states in 1950 after a successful Liberty Bond drive. The bond sale raised \$6.5 billion to help pay the military costs of World War II. In 1977, the bell was incorporated into the present design along with the adjacent fountain to pay tribute to the "Spirit of '76," America's bicentennial.

Trees and Gardens of the State Capitol

When the Capitol was declared complete on January 1, 1915, it was surrounded by only rudimentary landscaping. Beginning with the efforts of former Governor George Donaghey, state officials, groundskeepers and volunteers have added many trees and other plantings over the decades.

Native species are prominent in these plantings, but have been supplemented by exotic ornamentals. Changes over time – weather, life-cycles of trees and changing fashions – have altered the landscape. What remains today is virtually an arboretum; more than 30 species are on site, including many native Arkansas trees. The following information highlights some of the most notable trees and gardens. Follow the numbers that correspond to the map on page 5 to locate them on the Capitol grounds.



1. Japanese Magnolia

In the later days of winter, the Capitol's front façade becomes framed with the goblet-shaped flowers of the Japanese Magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangeana*). Also known as saucer magnolia, these small but spectacular ornamental trees become laden with showy white blooms edged with pink and purple hues. During the height of this display, visitors enjoy the year's most picturesque view of the Capitol.



2. Purpleleaf Plum

The rich, dark hues of the Purpleleaf Plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) give a striking contrast against the white limestone of the State Capitol. This low care beauty thrives in full sun and offers welcome shade in the summer heat. It emerges in early spring with blooms of pink and white and ends its growing season with a bounty of small reddish fruit in late summer. It is located northeast of the Capitol in the center island where the tunnel driveway begins.



§ Elm Varieties (several locations – see map)

A majestic tree that quickly grows to 100 feet in height, the American elm (*Ulmus americana*) is prized for its grand arching branches and symmetrical canopy. Also known as White Elm, it is native to Arkansas and much of the country east of the Rockies. The wood is moderately heavy, hard and stiff with an interlocked grain that is difficult to split. Sadly, Dutch elm disease has claimed a number of these giants on the Capitol grounds, as in many areas of the nation. Look for specimens along the southeast drive and near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Its cousin, the Siberian Elm (*Ulmus pumila* L.), lines part of the southwest drive near the rose beds.



* Oak Varieties (several locations – see map)

A staple in southern landscapes, the Oak is a hardy giant that provides habitat and food for wildlife as well as thick shade and brilliant fall color. Many varieties that are native to Arkansas favor the state's long, hot summers and alluvial soil. Among the varieties found on the Capitol grounds, the Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*) is the most numerous; look for these distinctive trees with long, smooth leaves near the northeast corner of the front lawn and the Medal of Honor Memorial. Shading a picnic area just southwest of the Capitol is a grove that contains Bur Oak, Southern Red Oak, Cherrybark Oak, Water Oak and Post Oak. Many of the younger trees in the landscape, particularly near the Little Rock Nine monument, are Shumard Oak (*Quercus shumardi*). In the grove north of the Big MAC building are Sawtooth Oak and White Oak.



6. Southern Magnolia

The majestic Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) is native to the southeastern United States where it is popular for its evergreen foliage and trademark flowers. Its dense canopy of dark green, leathery foliage can reach a width of 50 feet and height of 80 feet. This slow-growth tree is most noted for its large, white flowers that fill the springtime air with their rich, spicy fragrance. Look for Southern Magnolias flanking the Capitol's grand promenade, south entrance and southeast drive.



7. Eastern Red Cedar

Prominent on the north side of the Capitol's main entrance is an Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana L.*) known as the Jernigan Tree. It was planted in 1976 during Secretary of State George Jernigan's term to serve as the state's official Christmas tree. Growing up to 60 feet high, these fragrant native evergreens are common on roadsides and in woodlands throughout the state.



9. Japanese Maple

At the northeast corner of the Capitol you'll note the graceful, slow-growing Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*). It is a favorite in American landscapes, prized for its crimson foliage throughout the growing season. Find it among the seasonal plantings in the foundation landscaping.

10. Tulip Tree

The fast-growing Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is a pyramid-shaped beauty that grows up to 90 feet tall with a canopy of 35 to 50 feet. Its small tulip-shaped flowers appear high in the tree where they are often obscured by the large saddle-shaped leaves. Find the lone specimen of this native tree near the War of 1812 Memorial.



11. Shortleaf Pine

The official State Tree of Arkansas, the Pine, is a vital product in the state's economy. Its fast growth and towering, straight trunk make it ideal for use as construction-grade lumber, as well as plywood, paper pulp, and packaging materials. One of four pine varieties native to the state, the Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*) is also known as the Southern Yellow Pine, Shortleaf Yellow Pine, Oldfield Pine, Shortstraw Pine and Arkansas Soft Pine. Look for this variety near the Rose Garden along Third Street. Specimens of the Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*) are located near the War of 1812 and the Medal of Honor memorials.

12. Sweetbay Magnolia

Among the plantings around the War of 1812 monument you'll find Sweetbay Magnolia, also known as Swamp Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*). Native to extreme southern Arkansas, this species has a moderate growth rate and thrives in damp soil. Its leaves are narrower than its Southern cousin and are light gray-green with a silvery blue underside. It produces creamy white flowers from late spring through summer, filling the air with a rich, lemony fragrance.



Capitol Rose Gardens

Near the Justice Building and along the northwest lawn, the State Capitol Rose Gardens feature more than 1,500 rose bushes of over 50 varieties that bloom throughout the summer. Ranging from the English rose and hybrid teas to shrubs and climbers, these beauties are part of the national test program. Growers submit 20 specimens to the test garden each year, where they remain for three years before being replaced by younger plants and new varieties. Removed plants are donated to schools and organizations to share the beauty beyond the Capitol grounds and around Arkansas.



The Iris Garden

As spring warms the Arkansas soil, visitors to the Capitol grounds enjoy a flourish of blue, white and yellow as bearded irises begin to emerge in a dedicated bed just northeast of the Justice Building. These delicate-bloomed plants are tended by the Central Arkansas Iris Society.

25. Lilac Chaste-Tree

A lush heirloom, the Lilac Chaste-Tree or Sage Tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) is distinctive with its gray-green foliage and fragrant flower spikes. Sometimes trimmed as a shrub, the Capitol's specimen has been allowed to grow into a lovely canopied tree. In spring it produces tall, showy white or purple flowers that attract honeybees and butterflies. This beautiful standout west of the Capitol near the Granite Mountain Boulder is one of the oldest trees on the grounds and is believed to pre-date the Capitol itself.



26. Crape Myrtle

The premier summer-flowering tree in the South, the deciduous Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) yields clusters of showy blooms throughout the summer and into fall. Specimens range from 18 inches to 40 feet in height with flowers in white, pink, purple, lavender and red. The attractive bark provides interest in the landscape throughout the seasons. Crape Myrtles provide a focal point in several foundation beds surrounding the Capitol.



27. Yoshino Cherry

A fast growing ornamental that can quickly reach 20-feet in height, the Yoshino Cherry (*Prunus x yedoensis*) is noted for its attractive bark and early spring flowers. It is ideal for foundation plantings, as seen at the Capitol's northwest corner and at the front entry to the Vietnam Veterans Monument. From its white and pink spring blossoms, burst of yellow hues in fall and interesting wintry branches, this tree provides year-round beauty.



28. Sugar Maple

Fall visitors can look to the northwest corner of the Capitol for a stunning display from another Arkansas native. The broad five-lobed leaves of the Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) offer brilliant autumn hues that range from gold and orange to deep scarlet.

Thank you for visiting!

The Arkansas State Capitol is open to the public 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Stop by the Capitol's Visitor Information Center, located in the first-floor rotunda, where you'll find:

- The Self-Guided Tour of the Arkansas State Capitol booklet
- An interactive touchscreen with additional information about services and activities around the Capitol
- Building Forever: The Story of the Arkansas State Capitol and other videos showcasing points of interest around Arkansas
- The Capitol Gift Shop, open weekdays offering souvenirs and works by Arkansas artisans

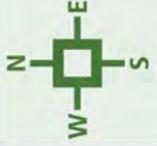
Other visitor programs are available on weekdays by appointment. Call (501) 682-5080 to schedule:

- Guided tours of the Arkansas State Capitol
- Capitol Quest, an architectural scavenger hunt for student groups
- Capitol Art & Architecture tour for upper-level students and adults

For more information on Arkansas history and the Secretary of State's educational programs, visit www.soskids.arkansas.gov.

Special thanks to Steve Burgess of the Arkansas Forestry Commission for his assistance in identifying trees on the Capitol Grounds.





Downtown Little Rock Attractions

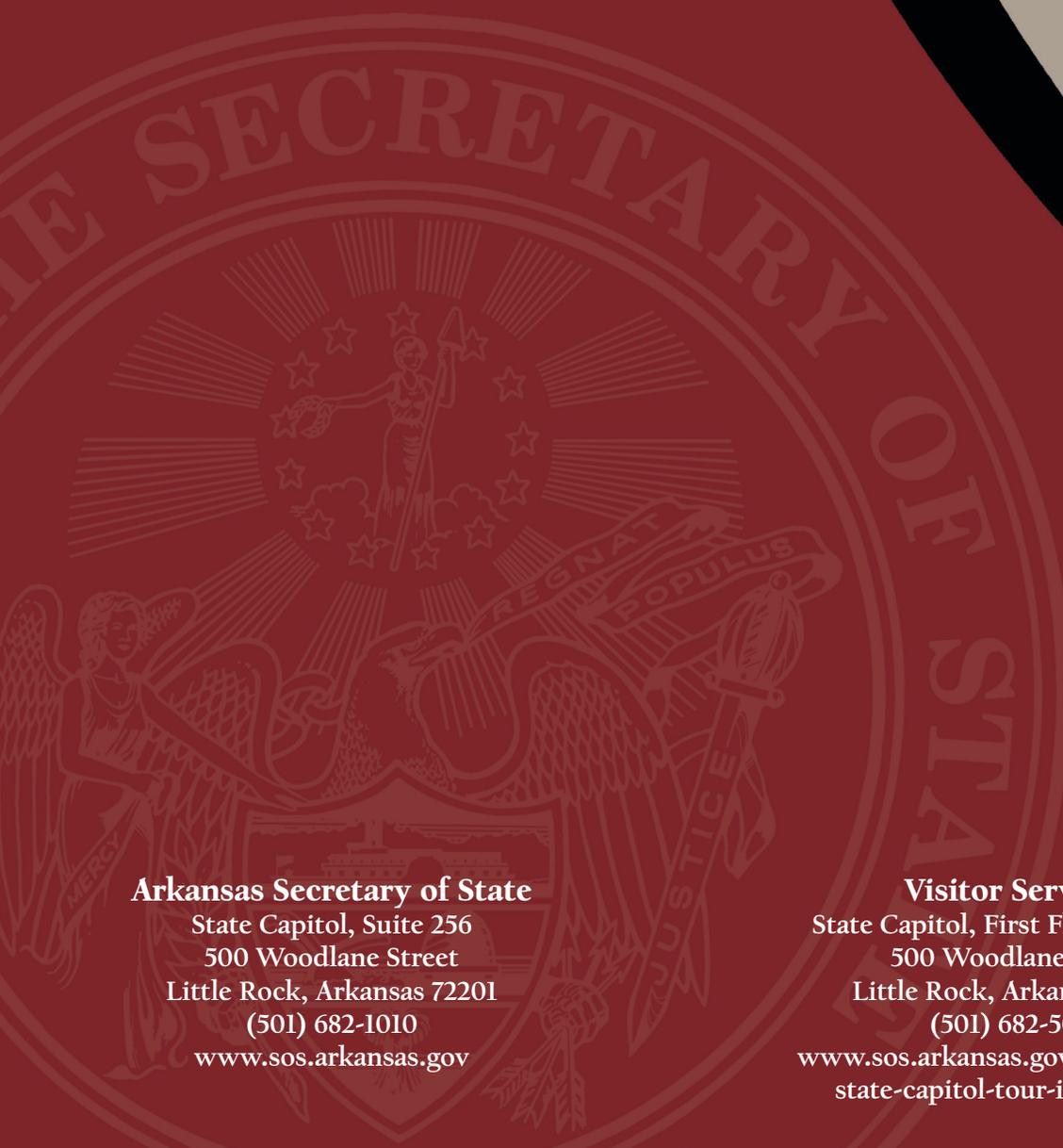


1. **Arkansas Arts Center**, 10th & Commerce
2. **Central Arkansas Library System, Cox Creative Center**, 120 Commerce
3. **Central High School Historic Site & Museum**, 2125 Daisy Bates Drive
4. **EMOBA: The Black Museum of Arkansas and Performing Arts**, 1208 Louisiana
5. **Governor's Mansion**, 17th & Center
6. **Heifer International**, One World Ave.
7. **Historic Arkansas Museum**, 200 E. 3rd
8. **Little Rock Marker, La Petit Roche**, North end of Rock Street in Riverfront Park
9. **Little Rock Visitor Information Center at Curran Hall**, 615 E. Capitol
10. **MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History**, 503 E. 9th Street
11. **Mt. Holly Cemetery**, 12th & Broadway
12. **Museum of Discovery**, 500 President Clinton Avenue
13. **Old State House Museum**, 300 W. Markham
14. **River Market, Dining, Arts & Entertainment District**, President Clinton Ave.
15. **Statehouse Convention Center**, Markham & Main
16. **William J. Clinton Presidential Center & Park**, 1200 President Clinton Ave.
17. **Arkansas State Capitol**, Capitol & Woodlane
18. **Pulaski County Court House**, Markham & Spring
19. **Municipal Parking Garage**, Markham & Spring
20. **Mosaic Templars Cultural Center**, Broadway and 9th Street
21. **Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center**, 602 President Clinton Avenue
22. **Junction Pedestrian Bridge**
23. **River Market Parking Garage**, 2nd and Commerce

Compliments of

Office of the Arkansas Secretary of State

Map courtesy of Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau



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Visitor Services

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[www.sos.arkansas.gov/state-capitol/
state-capitol-tour-information](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/state-capitol/state-capitol-tour-information)