

Role of native trees

- Although Kansas is dominated by prairie grasses, trees provide valuable habitat for both wildlife and bird species.
- Fire is a natural part of the prairie ecosystem and frequent prairie fires historically kept trees from outcompeting native grasses throughout much of Kansas.

Sterling College Quick Facts

- Did you know that in addition to native trees, the Sterling College campus has species including an apricot and ginkgo tree?
- Don't miss seeing the Heritage Gardens / Outdoor Learning lab located behind Thompson Hall which features native plants and wildflowers.

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Sterling College

Heritage Tree Walk

“Highlighting the diversity of native trees in Kansas”



Sterling College

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Heritage Tree Walk Guide

Use the following guide to explore the native trees of Sterling College

- 1. Pecan** — Typical height at maturity is between 70-100 feet with slate gray bark and pinnately compound leaves. The scientific name (*Carya illinoensis*) means “Illinois nuts” in reference to the state where the species was commonly found.
- 2. Pawpaw** — One of the few native fruit trees, this species is found in wooded areas and has large tropical leaves. The tree produces a unique six-petaled flower and edible yellow fruit that is considered a delicacy.
- 3. Pin oak**— Hardy species with a slender profile and pyramidal canopy form. The common name is derived from the small pin-like branchlets that are present throughout the canopy.

4. Eastern Redbud — On the southwest corner of Cooper Hall this small tree produces a brilliant display of bright pink flowers in the early spring. State flowering tree of Kansas.

5. Sycamore — The largest tree species east of the Rockies, this tree can easily top 80’ in height and has distinctive loose white bark.

6. Honey locust — This tree typically contains long sharp thorns. The seeds are contained in distinctive pods that are eaten and dispersed by wildlife.

7. Northern Hackberry — This tree has rough gray bark and the small dark berries are a good source of food for wildlife.

8. Cottonwood — The state tree of Kansas, this tree is one of the largest on campus and a distinctive natural landmark.

9. Bur Oak — The acorns of this tree have deep, fringed cups and are the largest acorns of any North American oak. The leaves are also large with deep lobes.

10. Black Walnut — This tree is valued for its dark-grained wood and edible nuts. An allelopathic chemical produced by this species can inhibit the growth of nearby plants.

11. Cedar

12. Northern Red oak — A majestic species of oak with a wide canopy and dark bark. Mature trees produce a brilliant fall color ranging from crimson red to deep orange.

