Tyler Arboretum is one of the oldest and largest arboreta in the northeastern United States. Built on property purchased in 1681 from William Penn by Thomas Minshall, an English Quaker, the property was owned by eight generations of the Minshall, Painter, and Tyler families through 1944. As a prosperous working farm, the 650-acre property once counted four homesteads, three of which can be found as ruins on the trails. The Home Farm forms the historic core of the Arboretum today. Throughout the mid-19th century, Jacob and Minshall Painter (Thomas Minshall’s great-great-grandsons) planted thousands of trees, some of which survive today and are marked with blue tags.

Their collection became known locally as the Painter Arboretum. John J. Tyler (a direct descendant of Thomas Minshall) and his wife, Laura, bequeathed the property to a Board of Trustees established to direct and oversee the land as a public garden. Dr. John Casper Wister, Tyler Arboretum’s first director, laid out the extensive trail system and built upon the Painter legacy by creating impressive collections of conifers, magnolias, lilacs, hollies, and rhododendrons.

Tyler’s History & Trail Blazes

Today, the trails are managed by our Natural Areas Committee, a volunteer corps dedicated to the stewardship of the wildlands inside and outside the deer exclusion fences. Tyler’s trails wander through stunning landscapes and diverse environments, including a pond and streams, meadows, woodlands, and rare ecosystems, such as the serpentine grasslands of the Pink Hill Barrens. Each trail connects to the Scenic Loop, a 1.2 mile loop through the Pinetum and meadows, and is clearly blazed for easy wayfinding. Several trails interconnect. Feel free to explore. Seventeen miles of trails await your discovery.

Trail Blazes
Each trail is blazed in a color that matches the color of the trail on the map. Trail blazes appear on the trunks of trees as painted vertical rectangles. All trail blazes indicate the direction of travel. Trail weather, bug repellent may be useful. Parents, guardians, and teachers are urged to keep a close eye on small children while near the ponds and streams. The terrain away from the trails can be steep, rocky, and uneven; for your safety, and to help protect our fragile plants, flowers, and ecosystems, please remain on the trail.

How to follow the map
If you’re at the Visitor Center or the Barn, you’re in grid reference 2B. If you’re at Gate 6, you’re in 4C. When you make a turn on a trail, look at your map to orient yourself. Use the symbols on the map to better understand the landscape. As you walk, you may want to turn the map in the direction you’re walking. A good quality compass (there may be one on your smartphone) will help you check your direction.

Map Legend
Rocky Run Trail (blue blazes)
Minshall Trail (white blazes)
Middle Farm Trail (yellow blazes)
Dismal Run Trail (orange blazes)
Painter Trail (red blazes)
Pink Hill Trail (pink blazes)

Trail Etiquette
- Please do not climb the trees. Many of our trees are old or have lightning conductors.
- Please leave sticks, nuts, leaves, seeds, mushrooms, insects, bones, birds, bird eggs, skins, reptiles, and feathers, flowers and all plants where you find them.
- Stay on the designated paths and trails.
- Help protect our plants and trees from hungry deer by making sure all gates on to the trails close and latch behind you.
- Please dispose of trash in the containers at the Visitor Center, or take your trash home. Trash on the trails is ugly and can be dangerous or lethal to wildlife.
- Thank you for not bringing alcohol into Tyler Arboretum’s grounds.
- Pets other than service animals are not permitted. Please leave dogs at home.
- Please leave bicycles, motorcycles, horses, and all-terrain vehicles at home.
- Thank you for not smoking while visiting.