

IN TOUCH WITH NATURE

# DSU to host arboretum nature walk

By Sarah Barban

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Visitors to Delaware State University's campus may have noticed that many of the trees around campus have name plates on them, identifying what type of tree it is. These new name tags are just one step that was taken in the process to outfit DSU with an accredited arboretum.

In order to have the arboretum accredited, the school created a design. After that, Dr. Susan Yost, an educator at the Claude E. Phillips Herbarium at Delaware State University, used a grant she had procured to plant additional trees on campus. After meeting various criteria such as conducting public outreach and labeling the trees, DSU applied and was placed on the Morton Register, an international register of arboreta. Creating an arboretum goes hand in hand with DSU's priority is to be more sustainable, said Carlos Holmes, director of news services for Delaware State University.

"Having an arboretum here on this campus is something that helps the environment," Holmes said. "Not only does it help the environment, it also

helps our students who are involved in a natural resources discipline. They have an outdoor lab out there."

The school had its collection of 173 different trees and shrubs officially designated as an arboretum last year and on Thursday the public will have the chance to tour DSU's campus to see and learn about some of the plants in the arboretum on a nature walk, led by Yost. The event is free and open to the public.

"The campus really has planted a lot of trees on the main campus," Yost said. "They're really is a wonderful collection...They're very beautiful in spring and fall."

Those who enjoy getting a glimpse of fall foliage and fruits will have the chance to do so on the walk. Crab apples and hawthorn berries are turning ruby red for the season. The campus' sugar and red maples, tulip trees and honey locusts should be showing off various hues of orange, yellow and red, Yost said.

The walk will also allow attendees to see trees that are native to Delaware, such as the bald Cyprus, the pawpaw tree and the Virginia Pine. These trees can be used to teach people about the importance of native plants.

"Native species really important," Yost said. "We'll definitely talk about the

pawpaw tree that we have. It's food for the zebra swallow caterpillars. If you don't have the pawpaw, then you don't have any zebra caterpillars."

Those who attend the nature walk will also get the chance to see and learn about some less common trees, such as the monkey puzzle. Its native habitat is the slopes of the Andes Mountains in Chile. It commonly grows to 80 feet tall in the wild and its branches are covered in sharp spikey leaves. Yost will also talk about the soapberry tree. The tree's berries can produce suds and were used in soap throughout history.

The walk will also help to teach people about the amount of diversity that there is amongst trees and shrubs.

"There is something called plant blindness, people just see trees and plants as a green background with no idea how diverse it is," Yost said. "They don't see the tremendous number of different species, especially in native and wild plants."

The nature walk will also give the community the chance to come in and explore DSU.

"This gives us another way to con-



Delaware State University will host a nature walk on Thursday, Oct. 17. Dr. Susan Yost will be giving the public tours of the university's arboretum.

nect with the community," Holmes said. "We can invite them out to things like nature walks and tree tours to learn more about these plants and learn more about DSU. A lot of people drive past and never see what's on campus."

## IF YOU GO

**WHAT** Nature walk around the arboretum at Delaware State University

**WHEN** 1 p.m., Thursday

**WHERE** Delaware State University's Claude E. Phillips Herbarium

**INFO** Call Dr. Susan Yost (302) 857-6452



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DJ Riv in Lounge

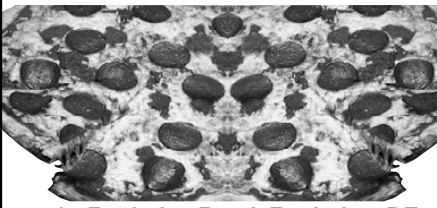
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