



# 1

## **Cherry Laurel** **(*Prunus laurocerasus*)**

Your tree walk today will take you along the gorgeous Des Moines Creek, spotting trees growing along its banks. Your first tree is just ahead of you, shortly after you start the trail. There's a sudden giant patch of green. It doesn't quite look like the other trees nearby, and it appears to be growing around anything in its way. It is a Chery Laurel hard at work, claiming its space. Chery Laurels are a beautiful evergreen that flower in the late spring and early summer. Fun fact, most of this tree is actually toxic to humans and should not be ingested.





# 2

## **Western Red Cedar** **(*Thuja plicata*)**

Moving right along, not too far ahead of the cherry laurel you'll find a Western Red Cedar. But wait, cedars can get over 200' tall and live over 1500 years; are we sure this is one of those? Yes we are, this one is just a baby! This cedar is probably somewhere between 7-9' tall right now, and while that may seem tall to us humans, this cedar still has a long way to go.





# 3

## **Blue Spruce** **(*Picea pungens*)**

Further down the trail you'll spot a tree with needles that almost look blue. Upon closer inspection you'll find that the needles are indeed blue! The blue color comes from a white powder that forms on young needles. The Blue Spruce is native to the Rocky Mountains states and is commonly used as a Christmas tree, for its pyramid shape and prickly colorful needles that give off a wonderful pine scent. The first Blue Spruce was actually found in Colorado at the top of Pikes Peak in 1862, 159 years ago!





# 4

## **Douglas Fir** **(*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)**

On the side of what appears to be a worn in, perhaps less than official path to the creek, you'll find a lone Douglas Fir. This tree is also very widely used as a Christmas tree for similar reasons. The one in front of you is another baby, standing only a few feet tall compared to a mature version standing at a cool 70' tall. This evergreen species has thick bark that makes them resistant to fire. They're known to establish really well after a fire, in wetter areas. Next time you see a forest full of them, you'll know there could have been a great fire there once upon a time, and now the Douglas Fir's stand to honor what once was.





# 5

## **Boxelder Maple** **(*Acer negundo*)**

The last tree was absolutely gorgeous but, its bark doesn't compare to the bark of this tree; the Boxelder maple. Just down the path, this tree can be easily spotted thanks to its green, smooth looking bark. Boxelders are a very common tree throughout the US and Canada. Their bark, while cool and unique, doesn't stay this color and texture for very long. It will turn into something similar to the bark of trees all around you. Some Native American cultures would use the sap of the Box Elder to make a fine, white sugar. Delicious!







# 6

## **American Ash** **(*Fraxinus americana*)**

You've come a long ways along the trail now. Under a bridge, past a water reclamation facility, now you're rounding a bend where a lone tree stands tall to your left. This tree, is an American Ash tree commonly used to make the wood of baseball bats. This tree is absolutely stunning in bloom, with yellow, deep purple and even maroon flowers. Unfortunately the Emerald Ash borer presents a real threat to this tree species.

# 7

## **Black Walnut** ***(Juglans nigra)***

Up ahead is another tree with something interesting happening to it. This tree is known as a Black Walnut and it has sword ferns growing on it, how cool! The fruit of this tree is a large nut that, when the hard outer shell is crushed, can stain hands, clothes, even concrete. This tree gets 50-75' tall and in some cases such as in forests where it has room to grow, it can get up to 150'!





# 8

## **Western Hemlock** **(*Tsuga heterophylla*)**

You're getting close to the end now. Of course this doesn't have to be the last tree walk you attend, unfortunately it is the last tree of this walk. Looking at the right side of the trail again, you can see the stream dancing behind the Western Hemlock now in front of you. This tree is spectacular for planting near rivers, such as Des Moines Creek, because it can help to fight erosion of the bank. Even cooler, the cambium of this tree is edible and can be eaten raw or pressed into bread!

