



For more information:

The websites listed below have useful information and links to more sources about the peonies discussed in this brochure:

American Peony Society

www.americanpeonysociety.org

Mid-Atlantic Peony Society

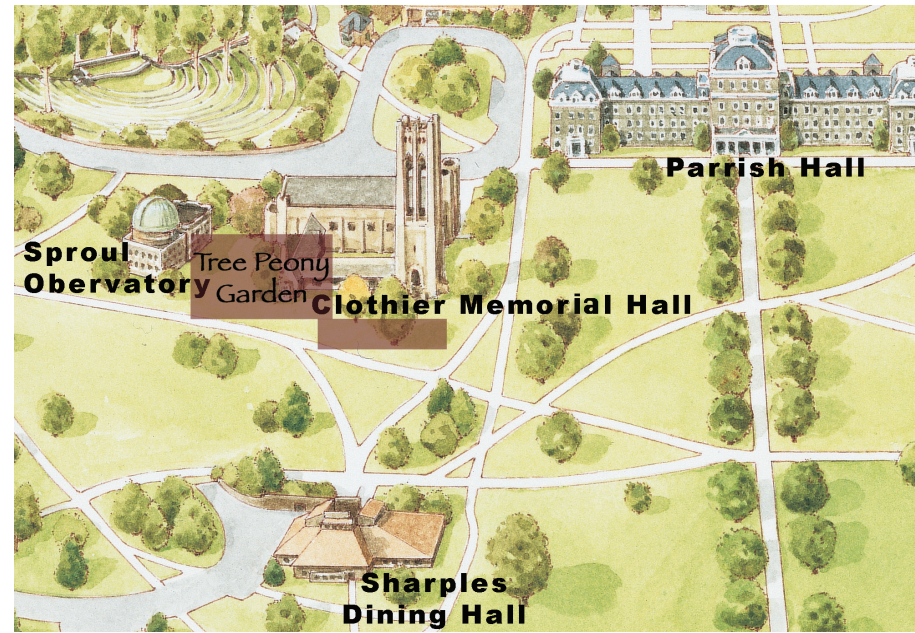
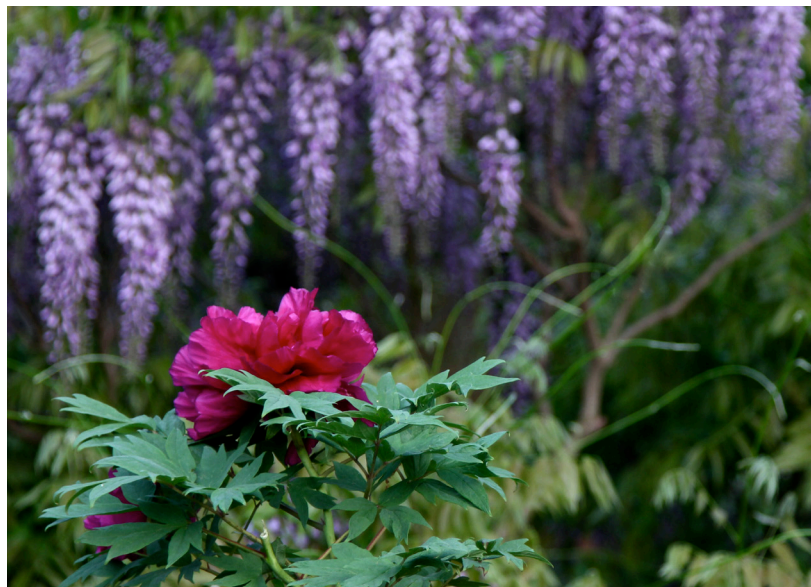
<http://midatlanticpeony.org>

The Peony Database

www.paeon.de/name/index.html

University of Michigan Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden

<http://mbgna.umich.edu/peony>



About the Scott Arboretum

The Scott Arboretum is a green oasis uniquely situated on the Swarthmore College campus. Over 300 acres create the College landscape and provide a display of the best ornamental plants recommended for Delaware Valley gardens.

Established in 1929 as a living memorial to Arthur Hoyt Scott, Class of 1895, through gift from his family, the Arboretum continues to thrive today. There are over 4,000 different kinds of plants grown on the campus, selected for their outstanding ornamental qualities, ease of maintenance, and resistance to disease. Major plant collections include: flowering cherries, crabapples, hollies, lilacs, magnolias, tree peonies, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, conifers, vines, summer flowering shrubs, viburnums, and witchhazels.

Maps and specialized brochures on plants growing on the campus are available at the Arboretum office, which also houses a horticultural reference library. The Arboretum grounds are open from dawn to dusk year-round. Admission is free.

The Arboretum is supported in part by the Associates of the Scott Arboretum, a membership group. Join today and enjoy an array of fun and educational events year-round. For additional information, call 610-328-8025, Monday through Friday, 8:30 to noon and 1:00 to 4:30.

Brochure updated February 2013. Photos: J. Jabco, R. Maurer, R. Robert.

Peonies



Peonies at the Scott Arboretum

There are three different “types” of peonies: tree, herbaceous, and Itoh group. All three can be found planted in the Tree Peony Garden area. Our major collection is that of tree peonies, which was one of the first collections established at the Scott Arboretum after it was founded in 1929. Today, our collection includes over 80 varieties of tree peonies.



P. 'Chinese Dragon'
Saunders hybrid tree peony

Tree Peonies

“Tree” peony is something of a misnomer; the plant has woody stems that do not die back to the ground in winter, but its habit is more like that of a shrub than a tree. These peonies have a long history in China and Japan. The ancient Chinese called tree peonies *huawang*--literally “the king of flowers.” Tree peonies were exported to Japan in 734 AD and the Japanese then bred these plants to have fewer petals than the fully-double, heavy blossoms of the Chinese selections.

Herbaceous Peonies

Herbaceous peonies are the most well-known of the three peony types. The shiny dark green foliage dies back to the ground every year with new growth emerging in early spring. These peonies make excellent cut flowers and are a great addition to any perennial garden. They are usually classified as “herbaceous hybrid” or “lactiflora group.”



P. 'Angel Cheeks'
Herbaceous peony

Itoh Hybrid (Intersectional) Peonies

Itoh peonies are hybrid peonies produced by crossing a tree peony with an herbaceous peony. Flowers from Itoh hybrid peonies resemble those of tree peonies, but the foliage is like that of an herbaceous peony, dying back to the ground and reemerging in spring.



P. 'Garden Treasure'
Itoh hybrid

Itoh Hybrid (continued)

Itoh group peonies have greater disease resistance than both of the parent types and can be used for cut flowers, providing more yellow and gold flower options than herbaceous peonies.

Cultural Information

Peonies are hardy to a wide temperature range--from USDA hardiness Zones 4-9. In the South (Zones 7 & 8), care should be taken when selecting cultivars; because there is no extended period of cold, flowering can be adversely affected.

Well-drained soil is an absolute must when selecting a site to plant peonies; they do not like wet feet. They also prefer soil high in organic matter.



P. 'Thunderbolt'
Saunders hybrid tree peony

Light Requirements

Tree Peonies

The more sun tree peonies have, the better their flowering will be. Strong mid-day sun will bleach the flowers and cause them to fade quickly. They should be located to receive morning and late-day sun, with high shade during mid-day. For this reason, it is recommended to plant them under the shade of older deciduous trees.

Herbaceous and Itoh Hybrid Peonies

These peonies will do best in full sun (8 hours of sun). Any less than full sun and it will take the plants longer to mature and flower.



P. 'Gauguin'
Daphnis hybrid tree peony

Many cultivars have very large, heavy flowers, thus protection from strong winds is also an important factor to consider when selecting a location for peonies.

Peonies are generally long-lived and do not require dividing, though it can be done. If you decide to divide your peonies, it should be done in the fall.



P. 'Luoyang Hong'
Chinese tree peony

Habit

Tree peonies have three types of growth habit: tall/conical (no coverage of leaves at base), medium/part spreading (some leaf coverage at base), and dwarf/spreading (great coverage at base). These various habits are important to consider when deciding



P. 'Roman Gold'
Saunders hybrid tree peony

which peony you want to plant in your garden.

Grafted Peonies

Some tree peonies are grafted, which affects how they are planted. Generally, grafted peonies should be planted with the graft 4”-6” below the soil surface. When in doubt, err on the side of planting deeper.

Flowers

Flowers vary in size, fragrance, orientation (upright, pendulous, or outward-facing), and fullness based on the number of petals (single, lotus, anemone, or thousand petal). Petals have a crepe paper-like appearance and range in colors from maroon-black through magenta, red, pink, purple, white, and golden to pale yellow.

In the Delaware Valley, flowering usually occurs during the first half of May. This is ideally set between spring flowering bulbs and rhododendrons. Deadheading is done following petal drop so the plant's energy is put towards the next season's flowers rather than producing seed.



P. 'Shima nishiki'
Japanese tree peony

Peony Beds

At the Scott Arboretum, the tree peonies are displayed in gardens according to their origin. Irregularly-shaped beds now contain several beds of Saunders' hybrids (Beds #1, 2, & 3); three of Japanese tree peonies (#6, 7, & 8); one of Chinese tree peonies (#5); two of French herbaceous hybrids and Itoh hybrids (#10 & 11); one of Daphnis hybrids, herbaceous, and Itoh Hybrids (#9); and one for miscellaneous hybrids and tree peony species (#4).

Garden beds are numbered consecutively beginning with #1 against Clothier Hall. The beds continue down the hill, along the pathway and turn uphill, towards Sproul Observatory.