

NSO PennTracks

Penn Sustainability

Overview:

Interested in seeing how Penn prioritizes sustainability on campus? Want to find the best spots to enjoy nature in the city? Curious how our campus developed into the pedestrian-friendly, green space it is today? Join the Penn Sustainability tour to find out how the Penn community is working to advance a sustainable future in our own backyard. Highlights include: turtle sightings in the Biopond, foraging in the Penn Park Orchard, and finding the best studying trees on campus.

Why You Should Return:

Penn will be your home for the next four years, and there is no better way to spend your time on campus than in the many beautiful green spaces Penn has to offer!

Transportation:

Walk to the upper quad gate at 37th and Spruce to start your tour.

Emergency:

In case of emergency, contact 911. Report emergency to NSO staff.

1 The Biopond | 433 S. University Avenue

The James G. Kaskey Memorial Park, or BioPond, was created during the last decade of the nineteenth century, opening as a research garden in 1897. The biopond was built by Professor of Botany, Dr. John M. MacFarlane, who convinced the Biological Department of the special advantages to be gained by reclaiming the waste ground which surrounded the department. In 2000, the pond was renovated, adding a waterfall and weeping water walls.

2 College Green

In the 1950s, the City facilitated Penn's plans to create its modern pedestrian campus by burying the trolleys underground and deeding the footprint of Woodland Avenue, which we now call Woodland Walk, to the University. However, this space wasn't really well utilized until the 1970s. Blanche P. Levy Park, or as its more widely known College Green, was the culmination of Penn's first ever Landscape Master Plan, finished in 1977, which was a large scale cohesive landscaping of the West Philadelphia campus core.

3 Penn Treaty Elm | College Green

In 1683, William Penn is believed to have signed a peace agreement with the Lenape people under a towering elm at what is now Penn Treaty Park along the Delaware River. Though no written record confirms the location, a Benjamin West painting depicting the scene has since become iconic, ensuring the elm's place in history. A descendent of the tree has graced College Green for well over a century, and there are other descendants of this tree at places like Haverford, Ursinus, and other area colleges.

4 Hayden Hall | 240 S 33rd Street

Hayden hall is home to the Earth and Environmental Science Department!

5 Shoemaker Green | Smith Walk

Shoemaker Green is a welcoming open space of lawns, tree-lined walkways, and sitting areas. This relatively new green space (finished in 2012) is both a destination and a pedestrian route from Locust and Smith Walks in the core of campus to the historic buildings surrounding the space and further eastward to Penn Park. Shoemaker Green's sustainable site management improves water quality and minimizes runoff via native plantings, a rain garden, and an underground cistern. This space also helps reduce the effect of the urban heat island through large green areas and increasing local biodiversity through its native plantings which attract birds and insects.

6 Penn Park | 3000 Walnut Street

The creation of Penn Park added 20% more open space to campus when the 24-acre park opened in 2011. What was a former industrial site is now home to two synthetic-turf athletic fields, a softball stadium, and a 12-court outdoor tennis center. Woven among these facilities are a variety of passive recreation spaces, walkways, elevated bridge connections, meadows planted with native species and more than 600 newly-planted trees. A cistern is located at the heart of the site to capture and reuse stormwater.

Penn Park Orchard

At the southern end of Penn Park is the Penn Park Orchard, which is a joint project between Penn and the Philadelphia Orchard Project. The orchard features peaches, pears, figs, cherries, berries, herbs, and a lot more.

Penn Park Farm

The Penn Food and Wellness Collaborative is a new program that brings together a diverse group of campus stakeholders including the Center for Public Health Initiatives, Wellness at Penn, and Facilities and Real Estate Services. The heart of the initiative is the Penn Park Farm, Penn's first on campus farm which grows produce for various hunger relief efforts and delivers year round programming. Their programs focus on health and wellness, food/ social justice, sustainability, and food insecurity. The PFWC was one of 3 winners of the inaugural 2019 Your Big Idea Wellness Challenge.

Crops include: kale, collard greens, mustard greens, scallions, beets, radishes, lettuce mix, lettuce heads, bok choy, cabbage, cilantro, carrots, broccoli, sugar snap peas, turnips, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers.

See <https://osa.vpul.upenn.edu/pgdesc/> for more information.

Penn Green

