

Centennial Park

History

Centennial Park is a 13 acre park that extends from Grove Avenue to Wakefield Avenue. It is the largest natural open space in Metuchen. This park also includes Metuchen's highest point, Beacon Hill (with an elevation of 169 feet). Many plant and animal species can be viewed from the walking trails. It was established in 2000 to celebrate the Borough of Metuchen's 100 year anniversary.



Wildlife

Centennial Park is full of wildlife! You can see animals of all different shapes and sizes if you go looking. Just some tips: Stay on the trail and do *not* pet anything!

Some Mammals you might see:



Eastern Gray Squirrel

(Sciurus carolinensis)

This mammal is gray with a reddish hint, and a white belly. Squirrels are excellent climbers, and, believe it or not, they can swim!



Red Fox

(Vulpes vulpes)

This animal has a reddish coat, black legs and ears, and a long, bushy tail. The red fox has very good vision and smell, and can run up to 45 mile per hour!



Eastern Chipmunk

(Tamias striatus)

This rodent is known for the two narrow white and black stripes down its back. They can carry up to nine nuts at a time in its cheeks, and can sleep up to eight days!



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

(Sylvilagus floridanus)

The eastern cottontail rabbit has large hind feet, long ears and a fluffy “cotton ball” tail, which is where it gets its name. These rabbits have terrific hearing and can hop almost two feet in the air!

Some Birds you might see:



Great Horned Owl

(Bubo Virginianus)

This bird is very large, and identified by its large ear tufts set far apart on the head. Their call is the iconic “who-who” call that people associate with owls.



Downy Woodpecker

(Picoides pubescens)

These are average-sized black and white birds. The male sports a red patch of feathers on its head. Woodpeckers also have a long, pointed beak, ideal for pecking into deteriorating trees.



Black-Capped Chickadee

(Poecile atricapillus)

This bird is small, with a black “cap” of feathers on its head and a yellowish belly. A group of chickadees is known as banditry.



Gray Catbird

(Dumetella carolinensis)

The gray catbird is a medium –sized fowl with a gray body and a black tail. This bird has a muscle in its throat that allows it to mimic some sounds, like that of tree frogs and other birds

P l a n t s

Centennial Park is full of foliage, from shrubs to flowers and the like. The trees let in enough light so that undergrowth can have a healthy life too.

Some trees to look for:



Sweetgum

(*Liquidambar styraciflua*)

This tree can be found several times in the park. It is known for its spiked fruit that you can find on the ground. This tree is referred to as sweetgum because of the brownish yellow sap it produces when the bark is cut.

Leaf



Seed

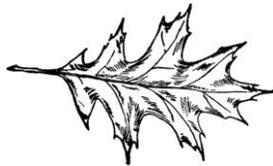


Pin Oak

(*Quercus palustris*)

The pin oak is one of the most popular ornamental trees in the United States. Some Native American tribes used Pin Oak bark to cure intestinal pains.

Leaf



Seed



Norway Maple

(*Acer platanoides*)

This tree's bark has small, crisscrossed bark, and produce lots of shade. It is banned in New Hampshire and Massachusetts because of the sap it produces that hinder s other saplings' growth.

Leaf



Seed



Beware!

Centennial Park may have lots of plants and animals, but it also has a dangerous plant known as poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Please stay on the trail and do not touch any of this plant.

Just remember these tricks:



**Leaves of three,
leave it be!**



**Hairy rope,
don't be a dope!**

Created by Katie Facchini
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