

DUKES 4 TREES

2022 / April 22 / Walk 2



TOP - Flowering cherry trees on the walking trail around Newman Lake. (JMU Office of Content Marketing)
BOTTOM RIGHT - The iconic fountain at Newman Lake. (JMU Office of Content Marketing)

Newman Lake

This little over 9 acre lake went through several major environmental improvements in 2014. Those included: adding a reservoir to collect pollutants and sediment, reconstructing the shoreline to prevent erosion, and installing an aquatic bench for water quality improvement and habitat restoration. An ISAT course incorporates student learning via a long term water quality monitoring study of the lake.



TREES AROUND THE LAKE

Cherry, Willow and Zelkova

Flowering cherry trees line most of the shoreline around Newman Lake. Weeping willow trees are a common species to look for when walking the lake. A new tree species to me, found scattered around the lake along the sidewalks in front of Greek Row housing, is the Japanese Zelkova.

The zelkova tree is in the elm family. It is hardy and tolerates a wide range of soil types. It is often used in urban street tree plantings. It has a grayish bark that when peeled back reveals an orange inner bark. Fun fact: It is species that can be used in bonsai.



Bark of a zelkova tree. (JMU Campus Tree Inventory)



Leaves of the Dawn redwood. (JMU Campus Tree Inventory).

Dawn Redwood

A deciduous conifer, its needles are lost in the fall. The dawn redwood is called a 'living fossil' by horticulturalists. In one year this tree can grow 2-5 feet in height, ultimately growing to over a 100 feet tall. It is one of only three redwood species, and the only one that grows well on the east coast of the U.S. In China, its place of origin, there are only a few wild stands left. A scientist discovered it in 1944 after it was previously thought to be extinct. It is classified as "critically endangered" due to human encroachment and is now a popular landscape here in the U.S.