Tourguide to Fairhope Trees

Corridor 98
Thomas Hospital Campus
Marrietta Johnson Tree Trail
Knoll & George Park
Mobile Street Park
Beach Park Tree Trail
Alabama State Champion Trees
Old Longleaf Pines dominate Knoll Park. The park also has fine Turkey Oaks, Sparkleberrys, and Sourwoods. Henry George Park has an exceptionally good Common Persimmon and a great view of crowns of trees growing below the bluff — including the State Champion Swamp Tupelo, which has gorgeous mahogany red leaves in the fall.

Mature Loblolly Pines, Longleaf Pines, and Pignut Hickories here have survived many hurricanes. A large White Mulberry stands at the foot of the stairway to the beach at the north end of the park.
Marrietta Johnson Tree Trail
The Faulkner Campus is home to the Marietta Johnson Tree Trail, established in honor of the famed School of Organic Education teacher. Before Hurricane Ivan the trail included more than signed 60 specimens, and many new specimens had been planted. Despite storm losses, the trail provides many examples of native and non-native landscape trees.

Corridor 98
The Corridor 98 Committee funded the major plantings of Live Oaks and Crape Myrtles from Interstate 10 to South Fairhope. In Fairhope, the Committee added carefully designed mixtures of Pondcypress, Baldcypress, Loblolly Pine, Sweetgum, Indian Hawthorn, and several other species.

Beach Park Tree Trail
Beach Park Tree Trail includes a beautiful mixture of species (25 or more) - most of them typical of wetlands or bottomlands - and two State Champions. Hurricane Ivan destroyed some of the 48 signed specimens, but replacements are planned.
Trees are a main reason why Fairhope is ranked among the nation’s best places for people. City parks and streets have thousands of Live Oaks, Longleaf Pines, Southern Magnolias, and other trademark southern trees. Private lands have even more.

The city today has far more trees, especially big ones, than it did a century ago. Old photographs show much of the area cleared for farming or logged for timber. Many large oaks and pines now dominating the city landscape are from seeds and sprouts of 50 to 100 years, or more, ago.

The City and its residents have a strong tradition of caring for the landscape.

Parklands donated by the Fairhope Single-Tax Colony have been protected for many years and contain a wide variety of trees, as do private yards. One result of public and private interest is that Fairhope now hosts 12 Alabama State Champion Trees – more than any other city in the state.

Major planting along city streets began in the 1980’s. The McGowin family donated hundreds of oaks and hollies to line Morphy Avenue. The Niemeyer family bought Crape Myrtles for Fairhope Avenue. A Fairhope Beautification Committee collected $15,000 for trees. The Eastern Shore Corridor 98 Committee raised over $200,000 to plant the Live Oaks, Crape Myrtles, and other trees that line US Highway 98, from US Interstate I-10 to south Fairhope. Garden clubs and many other individuals continue to donate time and money for plantings and educational projects.

In 1983, former Mayor James P. Nix recruited Fairhope’s first City Horticulturist, Timothy M. Kant, who became mayor himself in 2000. They established the Fairhope Tree Committee. The City Council, advised by Mr. Kant and the Tree Committee, passed ordinances to protect the town’s landscapes. Today, Fairhope has a detailed Tree Ordinance (copies available from the City Clerk) concerning both public and private landscapes.

The Fairhope Tree Committee, with help from volunteer experts, has established the five Tree Trails shown in this brochure. (Additional brochures on the Marietta Johnson Tree Trail and the Beach Park Tree Trail are available at the City Hall.) The idea is to help citizens and visitors learn to identify some of the many different tree species found here. It also is to provide examples to help people decide what trees they might wish to use in landscaping.