



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Cheekwood Launches ‘Garden Explorer’ with a Virtual Arboretum Tour on Arbor Day**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Every tree has a story to tell. Just in time for Arbor Day, Cheekwood Estate & Gardens announces a new virtual arboretum tour through its Garden Explorer plant collection database. The tour features 134 trees in Cheekwood’s arboretum collection now available to view from anywhere on Cheekwood’s website, <https://cheekwood.gardenexplorer.org/>.

Using Garden Explorer, visitors can access Cheekwood’s complete database of living collections. The arboretum tour has narrative descriptions, representative images for each tree, provenance and other important information. A significant portion of the Nationally Accredited Cornus Collection™, Cheekwood’s one-of-a-kind collection of dogwoods, will also be available.

Using state-of-the-art mapping technology, Cheekwood has documented the physical location of the living collections to support care and management as well as offer visitors the opportunity to explore the collections in-person or at home. “Sharing the plant collections with the public is an important function of Cheekwood’s mission and various accreditations,” says Vice President of Gardens and Facilities Peter Grimaldi. “The new online experience significantly extends our reach beyond on-site exploration and enjoyment.”

For more than half a century Cheekwood has been a cultural destination in Middle Tennessee as a botanical garden, a place for the exhibition and scientific study of collected plants. Cheekwood’s plant collections were started by Leslie and Mabel Cheek who had a keen interest in sourcing and planting boxwood, setting a precedent for other collections to follow.

Within its 13 distinct gardens and woodland sculpture trail, herbaceous perennials, shrubs, and trees combine with rotating seasonal displays to provide a place of striking beauty for inspiration and reflection. Today, Cheekwood's botanical garden maintains collections of specific taxa and plant groupings including the historic boxwood, dogwood, herb, hydrangea, southeastern native, and redbud. Plants are labeled to convey both scientific and common names, family names, native origin and are mapped using GIS software. The rich interpretation of the living collections at Cheekwood offers guests an enhanced experience full of opportunities to engage and connect with nature on many levels. With the launch of Garden Explorer, visitors can view and learn about the collections from the comfort of their home.

## **About Cheekwood**

With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th to mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including Cheekwood in Bloom, Summertime at Cheekwood, Cheekwood Harvest and Holiday LIGHTS. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a three-time voted USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden and in 2021 was recognized by Fodors as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South. Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. It is open Tuesday through Sunday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended days and hours of operation depending on the season. Check [cheekwood.org](http://cheekwood.org) for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

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## **Images for Media**

<https://show.pics.io/press-images/collection/626ab330b32e250019f3f952>

Images above, left to right:

Cheekwood Mansion, 2021. Photo by Nathan Pedigo. Cheekwood Estate and Gardens.

Quercus Muehlenbergii, Swan Lawn, 2020. Photo by Andrew Bruckse. Cheekwood Estate & Gardens.

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