

Where to See New York City's Cherry Blossoms

There are still weeks of pink and white flowers ahead.

By Julia Carmel and Hurubie Meko

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After months of dreary weather and bare branches, it's finally cherry blossom season in New York City.

This means that more than 40,000 ornamental cherry trees around the city will be bursting with white and pink petals for the next month, drawing thousands of people outside to enjoy them.

Here's an overview of what kind of cherry blossoms you can find in New York City, when they'll be in bloom and where you can find them.

When is peak cherry blossom season?

Once a tree starts blooming, it'll hold its blossoms for about 10 days. But when, exactly, each tree begins to flower depends on a mix of daylight and temperature, which is hard to predict. Most of New York's cherry trees are in bloom by mid-April, though certain types bud a bit earlier or later.

Despite the warmer winter this year, the city's cherry trees have been arriving on a similar schedule. The first bloom this year at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden appeared March 14 on an Okame tree, said Elizabeth Reina-Longoria, the garden's director of marketing and communications.

"We had several weeks of fairly cold temperatures after this first bloom, which held many of the other cherries off from blooming early," she added, while noting one spot at the botanic garden where the trees had fully flowered: the Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden, which includes the dramatic weeping higan that overlooks the water.

As for the rows and rows of blooms that appear on the Cherry Esplanade and Cherry Walk — those are still biding their time, Ms. Reina-Longoria explained, but she said visitors could keep tabs on when they might appear by checking [CherryWatch](#).

Elizabeth Peters, the garden's director of digital media, has said that her team updates the tracker by checking each cherry tree in the morning to determine whether it's in prebloom, first bloom (when about 10 percent of its flowers are open), peak bloom (when about half of its flowers are open) or post-peak bloom (when about 10 percent of the blooms are left).

What kinds of cherry trees can be found in New York?

There are 26 types of flowering cherry trees at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden alone, but the New York City Parks Department said that across the city, the three most common types are the Okame, Yoshino and Kwanzan.

The pink-flowered Okame usually begins blooming in late March or early April, but the Yoshino (which has white flowers) and the Kwanzan (which is pink and can produce up to 28 petals on each blossom) may still have flowers in late April or early May.

Jennifer Greenfeld, an assistant commissioner for the Parks Department, said that it takes care of thousands of ornamental cherry trees.

"They're really great trees, because they don't get super high and you can plant them under utility lines," Ms. Greenfeld said. "We actually have these long term contracts with nurseries that grow these trees specially for us in New York City."

Though the branches of cherry trees naturally hang low, which wouldn't be suitable for city streets, certain nurseries train the trees' branches to grow higher.

Where are the best places to see cherry blossoms in New York City?

By filtering for "Cultivar" Japanese Flowering Cherry" on the Parks Department's New York City Street Tree Map, you can see the exact locations of thousands of cherry trees.

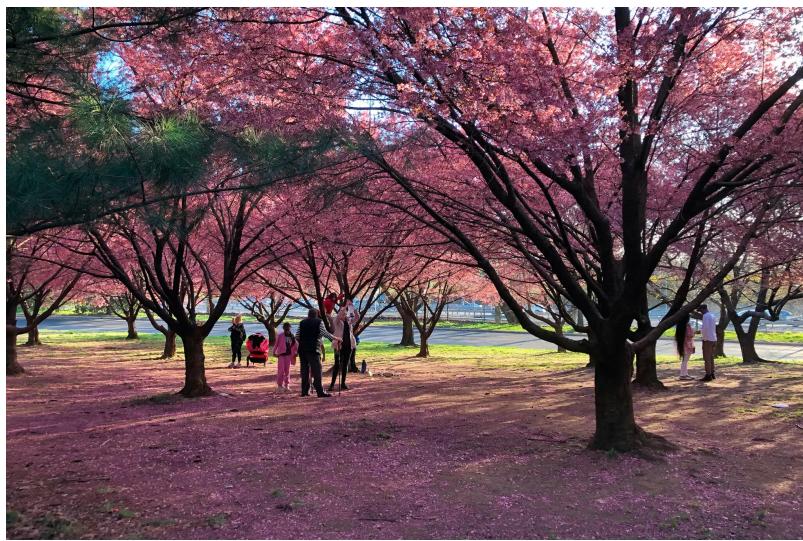
Sakura Park, in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, got its name from the 2,000 cherry trees that were sent to New York City's parks from Japan in 1912. Nearby, the **Riverside Park Cherry Walk** has cherry trees that run alongside the path from 100th Street to 125th Street, and **Marcus Garvey Park**, in Harlem, has a smaller walkway of cherry trees near the entrance on 5th Avenue and 124th Street.

Most of the cherry trees in **Central Park** are found between 72nd Street and 96th Street. There are 35 Yoshino trees on the East Side of the Central Park Reservoir (and plenty of pink cherry trees on the West Side), and the park has lots of other popular spots — including Cherry Hill, Pilgrim Hill, the Great Lawn and Cedar Hill — listed on its website.

Downtown, there are usually late blooming Kwanzan trees in **Union Square** and **Madison Square Park** (where you can also spot one Yoshino tree along 5th Avenue), and several Yoshino trees that bloom in **Washington Square Park**.

In the Bronx, the **New York Botanical Garden** has more than 200 cherry trees on its grounds, including a row of the pink weeping variety near the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. The garden's Spring Bloom Tracker shows the current status of cherry blossoms, magnolias, daffodils, azaleas, peonies, lilacs and roses. **Pelham Bay Park** also has Yoshino cherry trees near the City Island Bridge.

On **Randall's Island**, the trees will bloom near the island's Urban Farm and Fields 62 and 63. And there will be an Earth Day Festival on April 22 to celebrate the various flora on the island, including the cherry trees. **Roosevelt Island**, between Manhattan and Queens, has its own collection of cherry trees that can be seen along the island's West Promenade.



The Cherry Blossom Festival at Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens. Lindsey Nicholson/UCG/Universal Images Group, via Getty Images

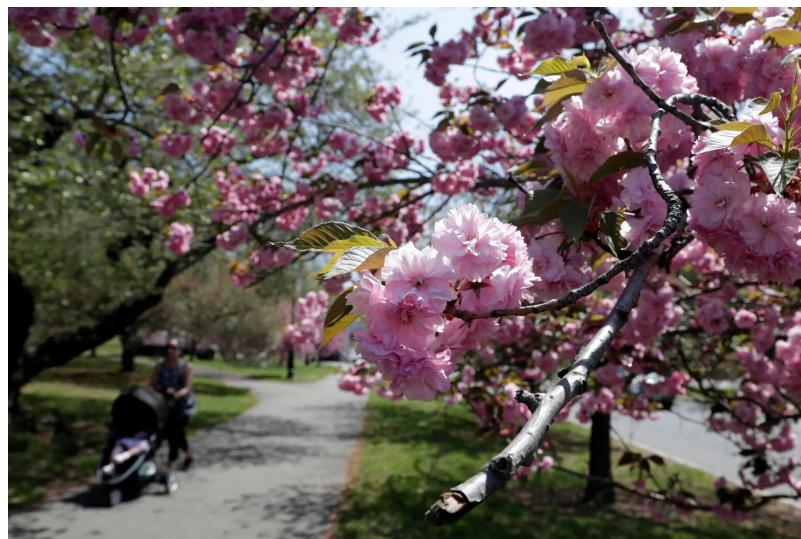
In Queens, **Flushing Meadows Corona Park** has a remarkable collection of Okame cherry trees near the Unisphere, which are usually some of the first in the city to bloom, according to the Parks Department. In Long Island City, **Hunter's Point South Park** has a ring of Yoshino cherry trees that frame the waterfront park. (Four new cherry trees were added in 2021, on Earth Day.)

The **Queens Botanical Garden** has ornamental trees in its Cherry Circle, and Astoria's **Rainey Park** has its own collection of Okame and Kwanzan cherry blossoms by the East River.

In Brooklyn, **Green-Wood Cemetery** has a collection of 172 cherry trees. They can also be found in **Prospect Park** (near the Grand Army Plaza entrance), Bushwick's **Maria Hernandez Park** and **Sunset Park**.

The **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** has more than 200 cherry trees, 76 of which can be found lining its famous Cherry Esplanade. Though its annual Sakura Matsuri festival — which used to draw up to 50,000 people over the course of a weekend — was canceled for three years because of the pandemic, the garden has extended hours and has spread cherry blossom-related programming over three weekends. (Ms. Reina-Longoria said that there would be free community tickets available to the public throughout cherry blossom season.)

Staten Island has trees spread out throughout **Conference House Park** and **Clove Lakes Park**. There are also trees on the northern side of the lake in **Silver Lake Park** and along Cottage Row at the **Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden**. (You can use the Parks Department's Staten Island Bloom Guide to find out when some of these trees will be blossoming.)



Cherry blossoms at Branch Brook Park in Newark, N.J. Julio Cortez/Associated Press

And if you're up for a trip to New Jersey, the Essex County Cherry Blossom Festival is happening at **Branch Brook Park** in Newark, N.J., until April 16. There, people can see 5,000 cherry trees — one of the largest collections in the United States.

With this all said, if you miss some (or all) of the blossoms, don't sweat it.

"Their blossoms are ephemeral, just like spring itself," said Ms. Reina-Longoria. What's important, she emphasized, was "slowing down to notice these changes in a cherry tree, whether it's one planted on your block or as part of a collection like at Brooklyn Botanic Garden."