

JAPANESE MOCK-ORANGE

Philadelphus laxis

Mock-orange is a genus of about 60 species of shrubs native to America, Central America, Asia, and in southeastern Europe. Most are deciduous but a few species from the south of the genus' range are evergreen. The leaves are opposite, simple, with serrated margins, from 1-5" long. The flowers are white, with four petals and sepals, 1-2" in diameter, and commonly (but not in all species) sweetly scented. The fruit is a small capsule, containing numerous small seeds. The bark is thin and flaky, finely shredding in longitudinal strips. Mock-oranges are popular shrubs in parks and gardens, grown for their reliable display of late spring flowers. The scented species are particularly valued.

Originally thought to be a Viburnum, the 1 species at the cemetery was later identified as a Mock-orange by Ann Fowler Rhoads, Chairperson of Botany at the University of PA, Morris Arboretum. With 60 species, it is guessed to be a Japanese Mock-orange. The cemetery has one Mock-orange tree, and a Mock-orange shrub. The tree is located on Valley Rd. close to the 16th St. gate. It is tree-like with a height of 13' and a width of 17' with a narrow split, twined trunk. It has a delicate small white flower of 4 petals which blossoms in late summer (Aug.). The white flowers remain on the tree until late Sept., at which time they turn light purple on top, deep purple on the underside with darker purple veins. The green leaves are long, slightly narrow, and pointed. There is a slight scent. The 2nd Mock-orange, a shrub, was found on the northern hillside of the Maplewood Ave. loop. Its flower has 5 petals, and it appears to bloom 3-4 weeks later than the 1st. It is shaded which could account for the blossom delay. It has more fragrance than the first, probably because it is in a confined area.

