

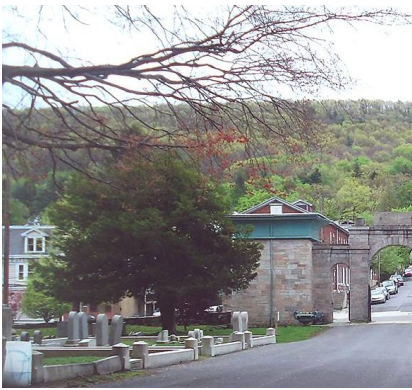
## JAPANESE YEW (SPREADING YEW)

*Taxus cuspidata*

Yew trees are some of the oldest trees in the world with claims of 2000-3000 years. Vast Yew forests covered parts of ancient Europe. Because of their longevity, the Yew was revered as sacred and symbolic of everlasting life with worship sites built near them. The hardness and flexibility of the wood made yew valuable for tools of all kinds and for longbow weapons and staffs. The Japanese Yew is an evergreen plant that is tolerant of pollution, winter hardy and highly adaptable to living in different types of environments. It can grow in either shrub or tree form. Some shrubs grow to 50 feet in height. The leaves (needles) are lanceolate (spear-like), flat dark green, arranged spirally on the stem, but with the leaf bases twisted to align the leaves in two flattish rows on either side of the stem, except on erect leading shoots where the spiral arrangement is more obvious. The bark is thin and comes off in flakes to reveal a tight brownish orange covered stem. The entire Yew bush is toxic enough to kill a horse, except for the fleshy bright red berry surrounding the seed. Birds can ingest the berry and disperse the seed. Japanese Yews are dioecious (a plant cannot hold both male and female organs— it must be one or the other). Only the female cones of the tree can produce the fruit.



There are numerous mature Japanese Yews throughout the cemetery. As trees, there are two situated to the immediate west and east inside the gatehouse entrance. The east one has fruit an aril (fleshy seed coat) that has a dark green cap and a light green base before opening into a red berry. There are 2 more Yew trees where 13th St. would intersect the property, one by Trinity Ave. and one by Mt Laurel Ave. One of these bears berries as well.



Many well trimmed shrub Yews dot the cemetery. The Baber plot aside of the chapel has one in each corner. Four more are on the Mt. Laurel hill by the Cochran arch, two more sandwich the Muehlhof monolith, and two more are on Elm Ave. on either side of the Comloquoy mausoleum.

