The American Elm that Grew Along with America

This American elm (*Ulmus americana*) is one of the oldest and most majestic trees on the Smithsonian grounds. It was planted around 1850, well before the opening of the National Museum of Natural History in 1910. Known as the Smithsonian Witness Elm, this tree has seen many momentous events pass between the White House and U.S. Capitol during its lifetime.

**How big is it?**

- **Trunk Circumference:** 17.75 feet (5.4m)
- **Crown Spread:** 116.5 feet (35.5m)
- **Height:** 80 feet (24.4m)

American elms are native to eastern North America and were planted extensively throughout the United States in the 1700s and 1800s. From the earliest plans for the National Mall, elm trees were the unifying element that linked the parks, avenues, and monument grounds. Around 1930, the devastating Dutch Elm Disease fungus was introduced to the U.S. and killed millions of elms throughout the country.

Today, great elms like this tree in front of you still persist, either through natural resistance to the disease, proactive maintenance and disease control programs, or a combination of both. This American elm is well cared for by Smithsonian Gardens’ staff and is the first tree cataloged in the Smithsonian Gardens Tree Collection, a living museum collection of thousands of trees.