

## **Board of Tree Conservancy of Darien Participates in a 'Forest Bathing' Walk**

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**Categories :** [Community Organizations](#), [Healthy Living](#), [Outdoors](#)

**Tagged as :** [Forest Bathing](#), [Shinrin-yoku](#), [Tree Conservancy of Darien 2016](#)

**Date :** November 5, 2016

One of the goals of local nonprofit, Tree Conservancy of Darien, is to educate the community about the value of trees. It was with that goal in mind, that some TCD board members recently participated in a Shinrin-yoku walk hosted by Jeffrey and Donna Wyant, Certified Forest Therapy Guide Candidates with the Association of Nature & Forest Therapy Guides & Programs.

Shinrin-yoku, developed in the 1980's in Japan, is translated into English as "forest bathing" and is a guided sensory immersion in a forest, or in the other-than-human world of nature.

Scientific studies have shown that Shinrin-yoku walks can lower blood pressure, reduce stress levels, and increase a sense of well-being among participants. It has recently been called "the latest fitness trend to hit the U.S." by the Washington Post.

Tree Conservancy's forest bathing walk was a safe and unhurried two-hour engagement with nature that began with the forest guides inviting them to leave any worries behind at the beginning of the trail. They were then focused on a sensory connection with the living world around them through a series of "invitations", each guiding them to establish mindfulness of place and to open their senses to the healing power of nature.

The group was encouraged to deepen their relationship with nature, at times closing their eyes and listening to forest sounds, breathing in and tasting the forest air and experiencing nature's own aromatherapy, at a slow and deliberate pace.

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*This article is from the Tree Conservancy of Darien.*

*See also these articles found by Darienite.com:*

- [How tech workers are turning to the Japanese practice of 'forest bathing' to unplug](#) (Washington Post, Sept. 14, 2015)
- [After losing her way in the digital world, a journalist tries to find herself in the forest](#) (Washington Post, Sept. 15, 2015)
- ['Forest bathing' is latest fitness trend to hit U.S. — 'Where yoga was 30 years ago'](#) (Washington Post, May 17, 2016)

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A heightened awareness of nature brought with it an indisputable calm and many readily offered reflections on simpler times and outdoor experiences as youth. The walk concluded with a tea ceremony with tea made from local herbs.

TCD board member Ginger Morgan shared her experience; "It was unanimous that everyone who participated felt a renewed appreciation of the natural world around us and an increased sense of peace and serenity, certainly a welcome respite from our everyday worlds."

"Realizing yet another benefit to maintaining trees and forests, really excites us as a group that has the well-being of the community in mind. Gaining health benefits from being near trees makes them even more valuable to us," said Tree Conservancy chair Sabina Harris. "We were thrilled to be invited and we are considering hosting a Shinrin-yoku walk open to the community next spring."

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Tree Conservancy of Darien is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the tree and forest resources of Darien for the benefit of the community, its health and its quality of life. Established in 2010, TCD has planted over 300 trees in Darien.

Its goals are to educate the community about the value of trees and their care, replace Darien trees lost to disease, construction and storms, maintain the care of new and existing trees and build partnerships with town organizations.

For more information or to donate to [Tree Conservancy of Darien](#), visit the organization's website or email them at [info@treeconservancyofdarien.org](mailto:info@treeconservancyofdarien.org).