

Columbia Park Children's Discovery Walk

- 1) **A Future Giant** — This tree is a Western Red Cedar, a species native to our home here in the Pacific Northwest. These trees can live to be 1,000 years old and grow to be 200 feet tall, but this one is still quite young - just a toddler in tree years!

The cedar makes tiny cones that are smaller than a jelly bean - can you see them on the branches of the tree, or find some on the ground?

- 2) **Giant Sequoia** — Next we visit one of the oldest trees in the park, the Giant Sequoia. When they are all grown up, giant sequoias are the largest trees in the whole world! So even though this tree looks big to us, it is still very tiny compared to how big it could become.

Walk up to the tree and touch its bark. It is reddish-orange and kind of soft and spongy to the touch, very different from the last tree we visited.

Its pinecones look different, too. Can you find a sequoia pinecone on the ground?

- 3) **Home Plate** — There are two baseball diamonds in Columbia Park - you can see the other one across the grassy field beyond second base.

If you were up to bat, where would you aim to hit the ball? How fast can you run the bases?

- 4) **Native Ferns** — You are now entering a very special part of the park - the Nature Patch. People in the neighborhood worked together to plant all of the plants and flowers that you see here.

The garden has several types of ferns, a type of plant that creates clumps of long, feathery fronds but which never makes seeds or flowers. Ferns are an ancient plant - they were around for over 100 million years before the dinosaurs!

How many different kinds of ferns can you find in the Nature Patch?

- 5) **A Place to Sit** — ... or to climb and jump! The logs and rocks along the edges of the garden are here for you to plan on.
- 6) **Columbia Cottage** — This cozy cottage has sat peacefully peacefully beneath the tall trees for over 80 years.

Although it often looks quiet during the day, this magical little building has hosted countless birthday parties, weddings, dances, and other celebrations through the years and continues to do so today.

What kind of creatures could you imagine living in this cottage. A hobbit or a fairy? A family of raccoons?

- 7) **Rhododendron Fort** — These large rhododendron bushes create a cozy little fort protected by walls of dark green, stiff, shiny leaves. Can you climb inside?

In spring the bushes will be filled with purple flowers.

- 8) **Braille Learning Board** — Braille is a way of writing the alphabet with raised dots. People who are blind or who have low vision can run their fingers over the dots and read by touch instead of by reading printed letters with their eyes.

This board shows all of the letters of the braille alphabet. What does your name "feel" like in braille?

- 9) **Comfort Station** — This little building looks like a woodland cottage and is over 100 years old.

Can you see the soft green moss covering the roof? Would you take a nap here? Why or why not?

- 10) **Splashpark Daisy** — In the summertime, this green daisy will drip cool, refreshing water from its petals. You can stand beneath it and pretend you are a little bug.

Congratulations — you've made it to the end! We hope you've had a fun walk and that you have discovered a few new things here in your neighborhood park. Come back soon!