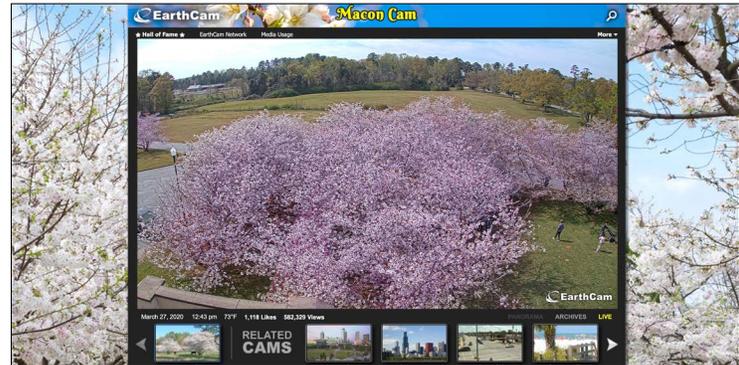


'BLOOM CAM' PROVIDES LIVE LOOK AT CHERRY BLOSSOMS IN DC **People Self-isolating due to COVID-19 have new way to enjoy the Tidal Basin cherry trees**

March 20, 2020 - Michelle Queen

DC's cherry blossom trees are now in peak bloom through the weekend and the weather is expected to be mild. Normally this would be a wonderful time to visit the Tidal Basin and enjoy the beauty of the cherry trees. Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 emergency and Metro to be used only for essential trips, this weekend is not the best time for Montgomery Countians to plan a visit to see the blooms. But there is another option, thanks to the Trust for the National Mall.

Thursday, the Trust for the National Mall and the National Cherry Blossom Festival announced a live cam is available for people to view the cherry blossom trees in real-time as they bloom.



The live cam or #BloomCam may be found, [here](#).

According to the announcement, there are 3,700 cherry trees cared for by the National Park Service across the National Mall. About 90 cherry trees need to be replaced each year as the average lifespan of a cherry tree is only 40-50 years. A few of the original trees planted in 1912 as gifts from Japan are still on the grounds today.

To avoid the spread of the coronavirus, things such as classes and tours of national parks are going online. The cherry blossoms in D.C. aren't excluded.

Instead of heading to the Tidal Basin, you can view the cherry blossoms from your computer screen. In advance of peak bloom, the Trust for The National Mall said it has started a Bloom Cam, a live camera where the blossoms can be viewed.

The camera will provide a 24/7 digital view of the Tidal Basin as it erupts in a mosaic of pinks and whites.

"People do come from all over, and with all the latest precautions and self quarantines, it's been encouraged to not come down. So we wanted to be able to bring the blooms to people across the country," said Catherine Townsend, president and CEO of the trust.

Townsend said the nonprofit, which partners with the National Park Service to organize private support for the National Mall, teamed up with [Earthcam](#) to bring virtual visitors to the Tidal Basin.

The camera's launch comes as people are urged not to visit the Tidal Basin because of the virus.

"An iconic symbol of Washington D.C. [are] the cherry blossoms, so it's just really a sad time that the festival had to shut down many of its activities," Townsend said.

Townsend said it took a week to set the camera up, and throughout its run, the trust plans to change the view to give visitors more angles of the Tidal Basin and its 3,700 cherry trees.

Peak bloom could come as early as Friday.

Metro closed two stations Thursday to prevent tourists visiting the cherry blossoms from crowding stations, it said.

For those who still plan to come down to see them in person, the National Park Service encourages people to make smart decisions and follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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