

# Topiary Park Fact Sheet

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**What:** An urban, seven-acre park, the Topiary Park includes traditional park features such as sidewalks, benches, flowerbeds, and landscaping; but the jewel of the park is the topiary garden—a sculptural interpretation of Georges Seurat’s famous Post-Impressionist painting, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Isle of La Grand Jatte*.

It is the only known topiary representation of a painting and comprises 54 human figures, eight boats, three dogs, a monkey and a cat—each made of yew and the tallest standing at 12 feet. The scene also includes a man-made pond to represent the River Seine, where boat-shaped topiaries reside next to beautiful water lilies.

**Where:** The Topiary Park is located in downtown Columbus, Ohio, on the northwest corner of Town Street and Washington Avenue. The Visitors’ Center address is 480 E. Town St., Columbus, Ohio 43215.

**When:** Construction of the frames and planting of the topiary shrubs started in 1988. The garden was dedicated in 1992.

**How:** The concept to create a topiary interpretation of the Georges Seurat painting came from Columbus artist James T. Mason. He constructed the bronze frames and planted the shrubs, and his then wife Elaine was the first topiarist. The park is maintained by Columbus Recreation and Parks and Friends of the Topiary Park.

## A quote from the Artist:

“The Topiary Park is a landscape of a painting of a landscape. ... If an artist can paint a picture of a landscape — art mimicking nature — then why not a sculptor creating a landscape of a work of art — nature mimicking art? The topiary garden is both a work of art and a work of nature. It plays upon the relationships between nature, art and life.”

— **James Mason**, sculptor and creator of the topiary interpretation of George Seurat’s famous painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Isle of La Grande Jatte*

**Timeline:** **1834** Ohio School for the Deaf opens | **1866** the Deaf School opens new buildings | **1899** Last building added to the campus (it is the only remaining Deaf School building) | **1953** Ohio School for the Deaf moves to its present location | **1981** a suspicious fire destroys all but one Deaf School building, city turns 7-acres of the site into the Old Deaf School Park | **1988** James and Elaine Mason present city with idea of creating a topiary version of the Georges Seurat painting, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Isle of La Grande Jatte* | **1991** the Friends of the Topiary Park is formed | **1992** the Topiary Park is dedicated | **1995** the summer Music in the Air performances begin at the Topiary Park | **1998** the gatehouse is completed | **2007** the gatehouse is converted into the Visitors’ Center