

Path of the Flood Trail: Self-Guided Tree & Wildflower Tour

Trees and Shrubs

This tour was designed to help trail goers identify common and interesting wildflowers, trees, shrubs, and other plants along the Path of the Flood Trail. You will find photos, information, and fun facts about the trail's native and invasive species. Happy Hiking!

Common Name: Red Maple

Scientific Name: *Acer rubrum*

Habitat: Medium to wet soil with full sun to part shade

Characteristics: Red Maple is a deciduous tree that grows from forty to sixty feet tall. Leaves are shiny green in summer and turn orange or red in fall. Red is present in several parts of the tree: red flowers before leaves in spring, red fruit, reddish stems and twigs, red buds, and of course, red leaves in the fall. Red maple sap can be used to manufacture maple syrup, but quality is inferior to syrup from sugar maple sap.



Common Name: Speckled Alder

Scientific Name: *Alnus incana*

Habitat: Medium moisture soil with full sun to full shade

Characteristics: Speckled Alder is a low forming shrub and can sometimes be considered a small tree. It has dark green, highly veined leaves and can grow anywhere from 12-36 feet tall. It blooms yellow or green flowers in April and May. Alder is often planted as an ornamental at water edges, but can also be used to attract butterflies. At one time, its bark was boiled to make medicinal tea for the treatment of rheumatism and also for the dyeing of animal hides.



Common Name: Devils Club, Walking Stick

Scientific Name: *Aralia spinosa*

Habitat: High moisture soil with part shade

Characteristics: Devils Club is a rhizomatous shrub that can grow from 12-20 feet tall. It blooms with clusters of white flowers that turn into small black fruits in the fall. Distinctive spines and leaf scars cover the trunk. The spring stem is covered in orange prickles but eventually it has bright pink fruiting stalks. The fruit is a favorite for wildlife, including bears. It grows best in open woods and flood plains. It is often used as an ornamental and its roots were used by early settlers as a cure for toothaches.



Common Name: Black Birch

Scientific Name: *Betula lenta*

Habitat: Rich, moist, well drained soils in full sun to shade

Characteristics: Black birch, which also goes by sweet birch and cherry birch, is a large tree with a straight trunk of brownish-red to black bark that is smooth on young trees and later looks like large scales on mature trees. It is common throughout the Appalachian range, found in woodland areas, usually on north or east slopes. Its seeds attract songbirds and it has pretty, golden leaves in the fall. It has the densest wood in the birch family. The tree can be tapped like sugar maples and the sweet sap can be boiled down into syrup. The wintergreen oil from young trees is used to flavor medicines and candy.



Common Name: Mockernut Hickory

Scientific Name: *Carya alba*

Habitat: Medium moisture soil with part shade

Characteristics: Mockernut Hickory is grown best in dry, upland forests and ridges. It grows from 50-60 feet tall, but can reach 100 feet in optimal growing conditions. Its bark is rough and forms a net-like pattern. Leaves turn bright golden yellow in the fall if it has had sufficient rain throughout the year. It attracts birds and butterflies and is also a great host for moths. Wood is highly used for everything from flooring to baseball bats.

Common Name: American Beech

Scientific Name: *Fagus grandifolia*

Habitat: Rich, moist soils in part to full shade

Characteristics: American Beech is a deciduous shade tree that grows from fifty to eighty feet tall. The nuts are edible and are a valuable food source for birds, small, and large mammals. The extinct Passenger Pigeon roosted in this native tree's branches. American Beech's leaves turn copper in the fall and will remain on the tree into the winter. The bark of the beech tree is unique because the bark remains smooth, even as the tree ages.



Common Name: Witch Hazel

Scientific Name: *Hamamelis virginiana*

Habitat: Medium to moist soil in full sun to part shade

Characteristics: American witch hazel is a tall, multi-trunked native shrub commonly found in the forest understory or along the forest edge. It has unique, fringed, fragrant, yellow flowers that emerge in early fall and remain well into November after leaves have dropped. It was once falsely believed that a forked branch of witch hazel could be used to locate underground water. Native Americans introduced witch hazel to early settlers for treating swelling, inflammation and tumors. Extract from the plant is still used today as a mild, effective astringent.



Common Name: Common Spicebush

Scientific Name: *Lindera benzoin*

Habitat: Average soil and water needs in part shade to shade

Characteristics: The common spicebush can be found in bottomlands, valleys, woods and along streams. It is a round shrub that grows 6-12 feet tall and wide. Its greenish-yellow blooms emerge in spring and are very aromatic, as are its leaves. Flowers and berries are attractive to a variety of birds and butterflies, most notably the Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly. Common spicebush is also deer resistant, making it a good native landscape plant. Both a male and a female plant are needed in order to pollinate.

Common Name: Tulip Tree, Yellow Poplar

Scientific Name: *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Habitat: Medium moisture soil with full sun to full shade

Characteristics: Tulip Tree grows from 60-90 feet tall and is a favorite nesting tree for birds. It has large, showy flowers that resemble tulips or lilies. They often attract hummingbirds. The leaves turn a bright gold in fall. The wood of the Tulip Tree is used for furniture, toys, and musical instruments. Its bark was used historically as a remedy for cholera and arthritis.



Common Name: American Sycamore

Scientific Name: *Platanus occidentalis*

Habitat: Medium to moist soils in full to part sun

Characteristics: This mammoth tree is easy to pick out in the landscape, growing the largest diameter trunk of any other native hardwood and reaching ninety feet tall. It has thick, crooked branches forming an open canopy of large, maple-like leaves and a distinct spherical seed cluster. American Sycamore bark is a beautiful peeling, patchwork of brown, green, tan and white. This native tree commonly grows in bottomlands or along waterways, but also makes a stunning street or landscape tree. Its seeds attract some wildlife and old hollows left from fallen limbs are used as nesting sites for birds and mammals.



Common Name: Black Cherry

Scientific Name: *Prunus serotina*

Habitat: Moist soils in full sun to part shade

Characteristics: Black cherry is a fast-growing native that can reach 110 feet tall. When crushed, the leaves and bark emit a pungent fragrance. Black cherry is a host plant for Viceroy, Columbia Silkmoths, and Tiger Swallowtails. The dark red fruit turns black in the fall and is a food source for a large number of bird species and mammals. Parts of the tree are used for furniture, cabinets, cough syrup, drinks, flavoring, jellies, and pies.

Common Name: Staghorn Sumac

Scientific Name: *Rhus typhina*

Habitat: Dry to medium soil with full sun to part shade

Characteristics: Staghorn Sumac typically grows to be nine to fifteen feet tall. The name "Staghorn" comes from the red-brown hairs that cover the plant stems because they resemble the velvet covering of deer antlers. The plant blooms in July and produces a cluster of fruit that is reddish-purple in color. The leaves of the sumac turn a rich orange, yellow, and red in autumn. Staghorn Sumac attracts birds and other wildlife because of its fruit clusters which live throughout the winter.

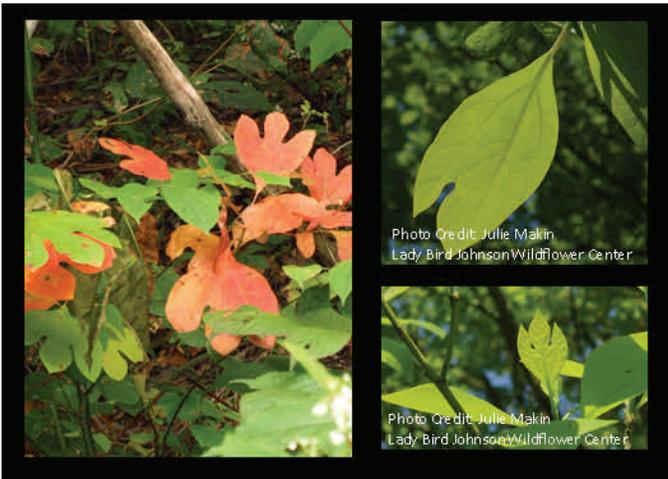


Common Name: Black Locust

Scientific Name: *Robinia pseudoacacia*

Habitat: Dry to moist soil with full sun

Characteristics: Black locust, an Eastern U.S. native, is a thorny, nitrogen fixing member of the pea family. Fragrant white flowers present from May to June are important to honey production. The tree provides cover for birds and small mammals. Because of its rot-resistance, its wood has been used for fence posts since colonial days. Black locust has a fast growing, suckering habit, which makes it good for reclamation projects, but bad for residential landscaping. Wood-boring insects and leafminers can severely disfigure the tree. It can be identified by its compound leaves of seven to nineteen dull blue-green leaflets which turn yellow in fall.



Common Name: Sassafras

Scientific Name: *Sassafras albidum*

Habitat: Medium moist soils in full sun to part shade

Characteristics: Sassafras grows up to sixty feet tall and can be easily identified by its three leaf shapes. Ghost and mitten shaped leaves can be found alongside oval leaves on the same plant. It is often found in colonies because of its tendency to spread by root suckers. Native Americans introduced early settlers to medicinal uses for this native tree. The young root bark, once used in flavorings and teas and considered a medicinal cure-all, was deemed unsafe by the USDA in the 1960's.

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