

INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

- 1 Red Maple
- 2 Lowbush Blueberry
- 3 Old Field Succession
- 4 Sassafras
- 5 Pileated Woodpecker Holes
- 6 Moss
- 7 Wolf Tree
- 8 Beech Tree
- 9 Eastern Red Cedar
- 10 Black Oak
- 11 Vernal Pool
- 12 Ferns
- 13 Skunk Cabbage
- 14 Highbush Blueberry
- 15 Autumn Olive
- 16 Stone Wall
- 17 Tulip Tree
- 18 Black Birch
- 19 Sugar Maple
- 20 American Hornbeam

See the Panther Path Interpretive Signs Information Sheet.

LEGEND

- TRAIL (PAVED/GRAVEL)
- - - TRAIL (PANTHER PATH)
- - - TRAIL (UNIMPROVED)
- P TRAIL PARKING
- 5 INTERPRETIVE TRAIL SIGN

PANTHER PATH INTERPRETIVE SIGNS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRAILS

SCHOOL DRIVE
MARLBOROUGH, CONNECTICUT
4-26-2018

MAP IS APPROXIMATE FOR INFORMATIONAL USE ONLY.

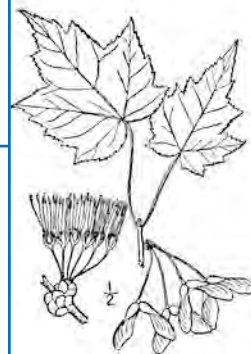
SEE TRAIL MAP FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the Panther Path Interpretive Signs at the Elementary School Trails. Along this trail are twenty signs providing information on a variety of woodland plants and features common to Connecticut forests. The numbers on the signs and trail map correspond to the information presented below. We hope you enjoy the walk and encourage you to investigate the rest of the Elementary School Trail system.

1

Red Maple

Scientific Name: *Acer rubrum*



Size: 60 to 90 feet; leaves 2 to 4 inches long usually with 3 palmate lobes.

Habitat: widespread in the eastern U.S. from Maine to Florida.

Also known as Swamp Maple, it often can be found in wet soils, although it can grow almost anywhere. Leaves turn brilliant red in the fall. It is the state tree of Rhode Island.

2

Lowbush Blueberry

Scientific Name: *Vaccinium angustifolium*



Size: low growing shrub, 12" to 24" tall.

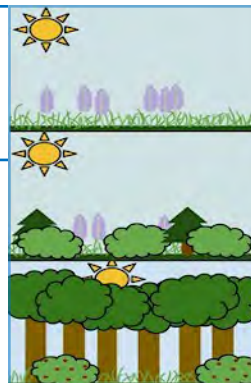
Habitat: widespread in the northeast U.S. and eastern Canada.

Produces a small dark blue berry that is eaten by birds, rodents and bears. It is grown commercially in Maine (where it is the state fruit) and Canada mainly from managed wild patches.

3

Old Field Succession

(This area was cleared in 2017)



Old field succession occurs when formerly cleared/cultivated land is allowed to regrow undisturbed. Succession begins with weeds and grasses, progresses thru shrubs and saplings, and culminates with a mature forest. The entire process can take 100 years or more. This area was cleared for the water project in 2017 and a grass cover established, but it has been allowed to revegetate naturally since then.

4

Sassafras

Scientific Name: *Sassafras albidum*



Size: 50 to 65 feet; leaves 4 to 6 inches long with 1, 2 or 3 lobes.

Habitat: Eastern U.S. from Maine to Florida.

Has three shapes of leaves, oval, "mitten", and three-lobed forms, all of which may be found on the same branch. When crushed, the leaves will have a very aromatic smell (some liken it to root beer).

5

Pileated Woodpecker Holes

Scientific Name: *Dryocopus pileatus* (Pileated Woodpecker)

Hole Size: Opening 3-5 inches. Cavity 8" wide to 22" deep.

Bird Habitat: Eastern U.S., across Canada to portions of the west coast.

Pileated woodpeckers excavate large rectangular nests in the cavities of dead trees. The birds will only use the nest once, after which it may be reused by other birds and animals. They also make holes in trees in order to search for insects to eat.



6

Moss

Scientific Name: Division: Bryophyta

Size: 1/2 inch to 4 inches tall.

Habitat: wooded areas; near streams; any wet, dark location.

There are many species of mosses which usually grow close together in clumps in damp or shady locations. Moss does not have flowers or seeds. At certain times, they produce spores. Often grows best on the north side of trees and rocks because there is less sunlight and more moisture.



7

Wolf Tree

Scientific Name: Depends on tree species

Size: Usually among the largest trees in the area. Habitat: any forested area.

A "wolf tree" refers to a large forest tree that has a broad spreading crown and which limits the growth of smaller trees around it. The horizontal branches indicate that the tree once grew in a more open environment. Being within the stone wall, this former wolf tree probably grew when the adjacent woods were open fields.



8

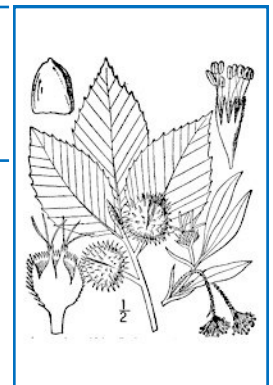
American Beech

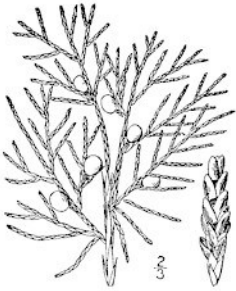
Scientific Name: *Fagus grandifolia*

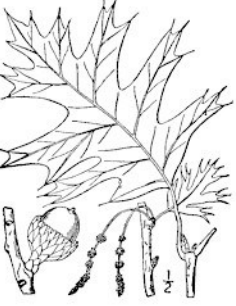
Size: 65 to 115 feet; leaves 2.5 to 4.5 inches long with small teeth..


Habitat: widespread in the eastern U.S. and Canada.


The wood is slightly reddish-brown and is used for furniture, flooring, and even wooden spoons. The beechnuts are a food source for a wide variety of animals, including deer, turkeys, raccoons, foxes, rabbits, squirrels, and porcupines.





9	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Eastern Red Cedar</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Juniperus virginiana</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 10 to 40 feet; small scale-like evergreen leaves. Habitat: eastern and central U.S. from Maine to Georgia.</p> <p>It is a pioneer species being one of the first to repopulate cleared land. The reddish-brown aromatic wood is used in cedar chests to control moths. The rot resistant wood has widely been used for fence posts.</p>		


10	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Black Oak</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Quercus velutina</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 65 to 80 feet; leaves 4 to 8 inches long with 5 to 7 pointed lobes. Habitat: eastern and central U.S. from Maine to Georgia.</p> <p>Black oak is used as construction lumber, fence posts, furniture, flooring, and firewood. The acorns are an important food source for a variety of forest animals.</p>		


11	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Vernal Pool</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Vernal: relating to spring (e.g. vernal equinox)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: usually small and shallow with no defined inlet or outlet. Habitat: anywhere</p> <p>Vernal pools are temporary bodies of water that are wet in the spring but usually dry out by summer. Because they typically are dry part of the year, they do not contain fish, but are a prime habitat for salamanders, frogs, toads, and fairy shrimp.</p>		

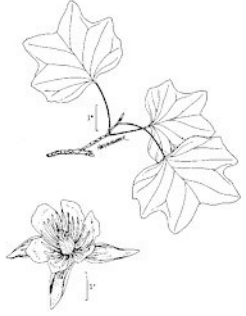
12	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Hayscented Fern</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: triangular leaves (fronds) are 12 to 36" tall. Habitat: widespread in the eastern U.S. and Canada</p> <p>Very common fern often found growing in colonies carpeting the forest floor. It is named "hay-scented" because some people think the crushed leaves smell like freshly mown hay.</p>		


13	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Skunk Cabbage</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: leaves 15 to 22 inches long by 12 to 15 inches wide. Habitat: northeastern U.S. and Canada.</p> <p>Widespread in wet soils, skunk cabbage is so named because breaking or crushing the leaves produces a pungent distinctive odor. This odor attracts flies which pollinate the plant and may help protect the plant from damage from animals.</p>		


14	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Highbush Blueberry</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 6 to 12 feet tall; oval leaves are about 2 inches long Habitat: widespread in the eastern U.S. from Maine to Georgia.</p> <p>The highbush blueberry is the most common commercially grown blueberry in the U.S. producing 1/4" to 1/2" round blue berries. The berries of wild bushes provide food for birds, bears and small animals. It is the state fruit of New Jersey.</p>		

15	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Autumn Olive</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: up to 12 feet tall; leaves 2 to 4 inches long. Habitat: widespread in the eastern U.S. from Maine to Florida.</p> <p>Autumn olives were once widely planted along highways and for landscaping, however, they are now considered an invasive species. They are hardy and fast growing, have fragrant white flowers, and produce clusters of small red berries.</p>		

16	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Stone Wall</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">(dry rubble construction)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: usually 2 to 3 feet high and 2 to 3 feet wide Habitat: edge of field or meadow</p> <p>In earlier times, stone walls typically surrounded cemeteries, cow pastures, farms, or animal pounds. The walls were constructed of stones removed from the adjacent fields. As recently as the mid 1950s, parts of the woods along the "Panther Path" were open fields.</p>		

17	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Tulip Tree</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 70 to 100 feet; leaves 4 to 8 inches long tulip shaped.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Habitat: eastern U.S. from Connecticut to Florida.</p> <p>Also known as Yellow Poplar, although it is not a true poplar, but actually a member of the magnolia family. The tree can be identified by its distinctive tulip shaped leaves and tulip shaped flowers. It is the state tree of Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee.</p>		

18	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Black Birch</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Betula lenta</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 50 to 60 feet; oval leaves 2 to 4 inches with finely serrated edges.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Habitat: southern New England and Appalachian mountains.</p> <p>Also known as Sweet Birch because the twigs smell of wintergreen when crushed. Birch sap can be boiled like maple sap, but the syrup is stronger, like molasses. The leaves are eaten by a variety of moth and butterfly caterpillars.</p>		

19	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Sugar Maple</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Acer saccharum</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 60 to 90 feet; leaves are roughly 8 inches with 5 palmate lobes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Habitat: New England thru the great lakes region.</p> <p>Best known for its sap which is collected and turned into maple syrup. Its wood is also used for furniture, flooring, musical instruments and bowling pins. A sugar maple leaf is on the national flag of Canada and it is the state tree of Vermont, New York, West Virginia and Wisconsin.</p>		


20	<h2 style="text-align: center;">American Hornbeam</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Scientific Name: <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Size: 20 to 30 feet; oval leaves 1 to 4 inches with finely serrated edges.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Habitat: eastern U.S. from Maine to Georgia</p> <p>It is also known as Ironwood because the timber is hard and durable, however, its small size limits the wood's usefulness to smaller objects such as fence posts, tool handles, and walking sticks. It often has a crooked and fluted trunk.</p>		

Image Credits:

- USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database: 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20
- Elizabeth Farnsworth: 15
- Katelyn Murphy: 3
- NTSC photo: 5, 6, 7, 11, 16