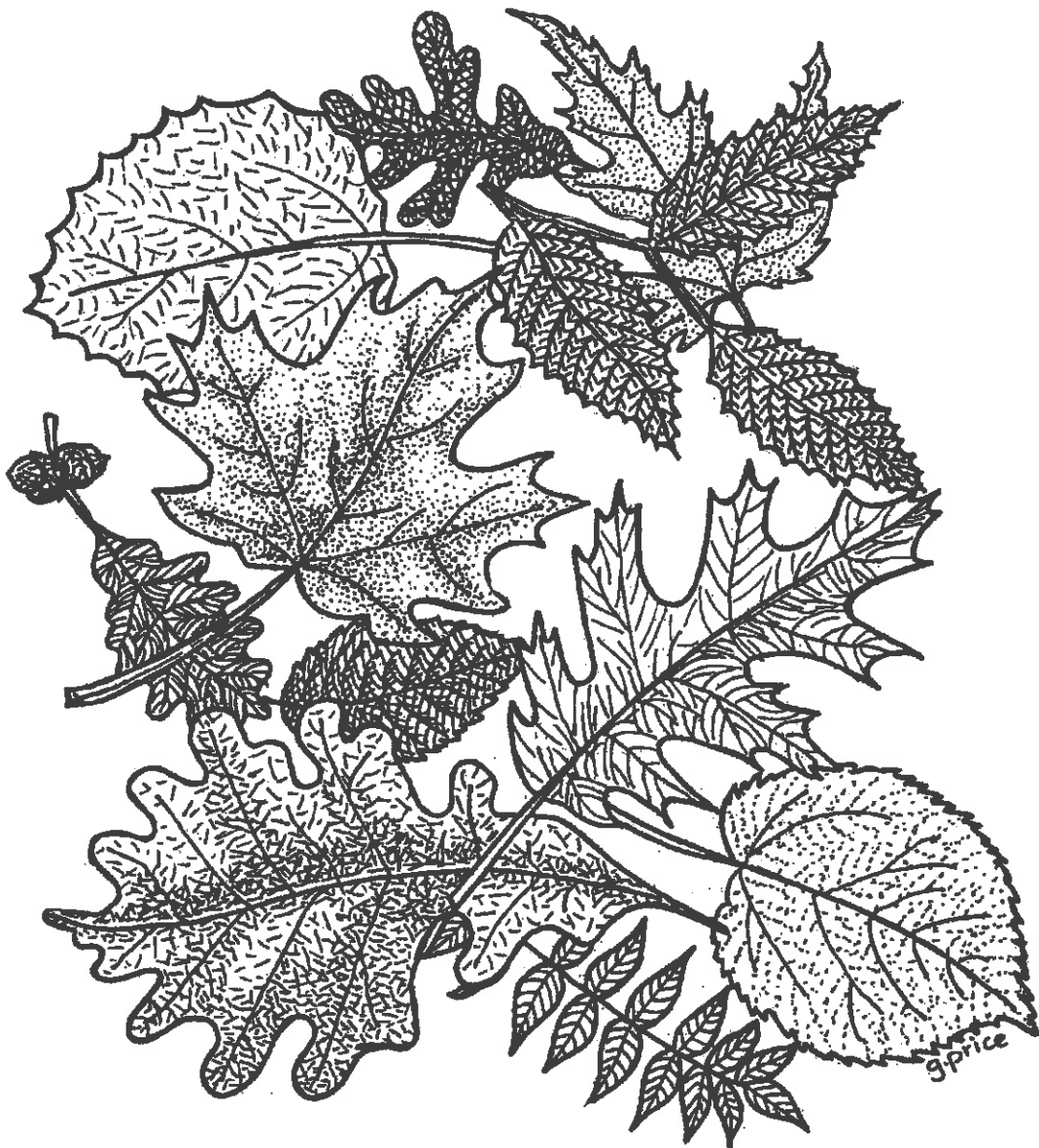


# Tree Trail Guide

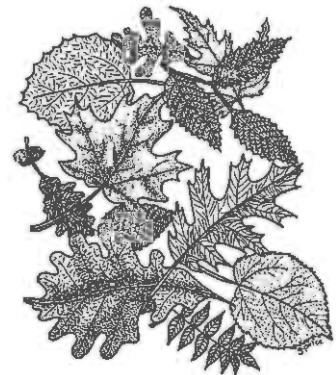
*Tri-County School Forest*

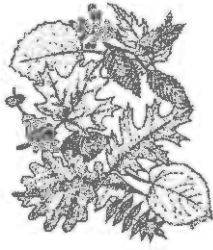


# Welcome to the **Tri-County School Forest** **Self-Guided Tree Identification Trail**

The trail you are about to travel is an informative tree identification trail. It is just a small section of a larger trail system that winds throughout all of the school forest's inhabitants-the trees! Along the way, there are nineteen points of interest where you can discover the names and characteristics of unfamiliar trees or review the ones that you are already familiar with.

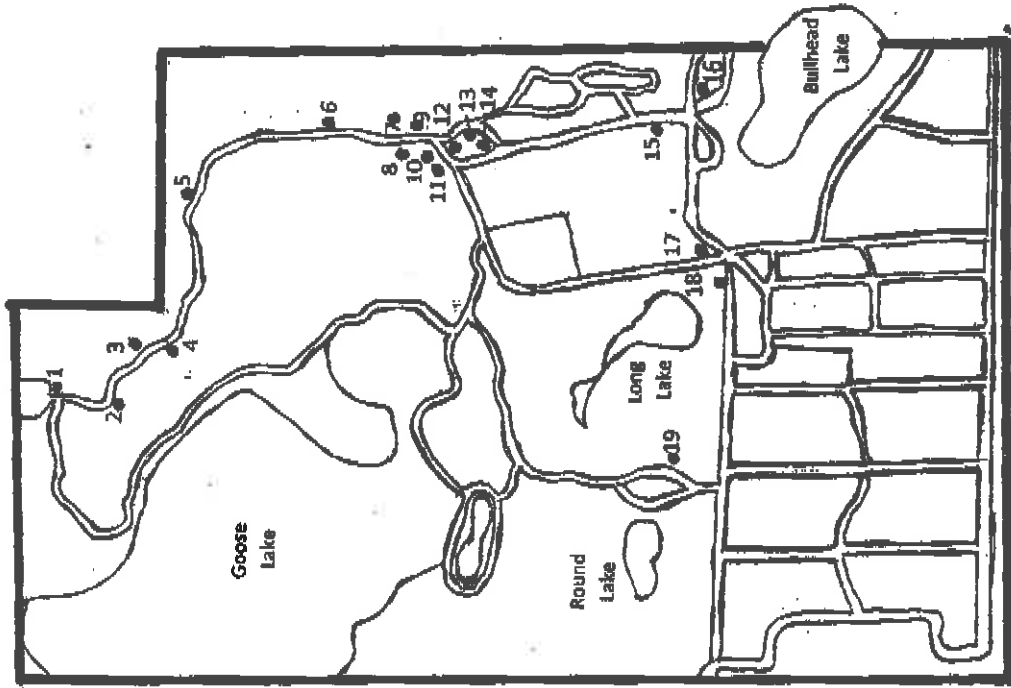
You are now entering a very special kind of forest. It is not only a disappearing part of Wisconsin's natural landscape, but is also a unique area that makes it a transition forest. The word transition means "change." Our school forest "changes" from the mighty broadleaf trees (Pin and White Oak) of the northern end of the property to the strong pine trees (White and Red Pine) of the south end of the property. Also, our property is a transition of sorts when thinking of the state as a whole. To our north lies the north woods, and to our south agricultural areas and broadleaf forests. Here, in the Central Sands we see trees common to both areas. One needs not to look too far in the school property to also observe tree species in transition between wetland and upland areas. This gives our forest some very special combinations of habitat, and makes it unique that one can experience these all in one location. So, take a hike and enjoy the natural beauty of the natural outdoors!





## **Table of Contents**

<u>Species</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	2
Map of Trees in the Forest	3
Red Cedar	4
Black Oak	5
Black Cherry	6
Red Maple	7
White Spruce	8
Quaking Aspen	9
Paper Birch	10
Scotch Pine	11
Jack Pine	12
White Oak	13
American Elm	14
Large-Tooth Aspen	15
Red Pine	16
White Cedar	17
White Pine	18
Pin Oak	19
Norway Spruce	20
Bur Oak	21
Hackberry	22

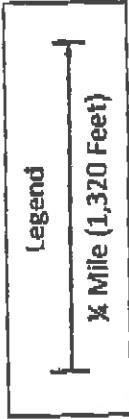
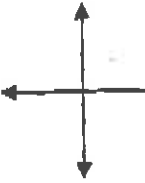


# Tri-County School Forest

Established: 1969

Township of Hancock

N



**1. Red Cedar**  
(*Juniperus Virginiana*)



The first stop is the Red Cedar. This fragrant tree has a compact and columnar crown. The cones are dark blue, and berries can also be found on this tree. Compare the cones and/or berries to the ones on the display case.

The Red Cedar is found in limestone plains, swamps, in abandoned fields, and along fence rows. This tree is native in thirty-seven states and can withstand excessive drought, heat, and cold. The wood is commonly used for fence posts, cedar chests, cabinet wood carvings, and pencils. The oil obtained from the leaves and wood is used in medicine and perfume.

It is believed that this tree was the first observed by colonists in Roanoke Island, Virginia, in 1564. Colonists used this tree for furniture, rail fences, and log cabins.

## 2. Black Oak

(*Quercus Velutina*)

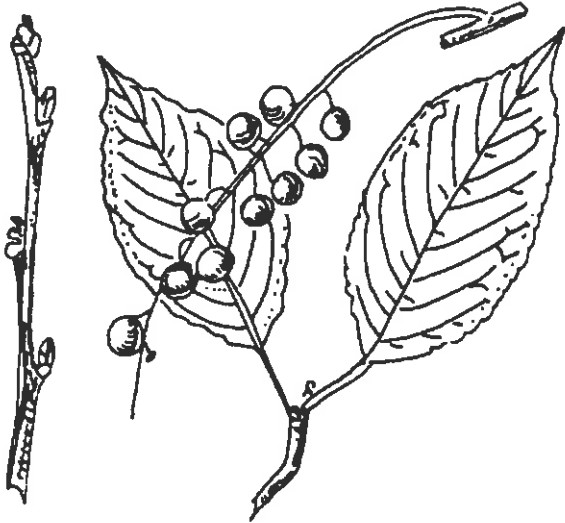


Your second trip brings you to the widely known Black Oak. This tree, with its ever changing bark, can be found in habitats from sandy and rocky ridges to clay hillsides. The acorns of this tree are narrow at the base with a fringe border of loose rust-brown scales. It is often a “brachier” tree (many of it’s branches are often dead) than it’s cousin the red oak.

If this is a young Black Oak, the bark will be grey and smooth to the touch. If this is an older Black Oak, the bark will be thick and rough to the touch, with deeply furrowed ridges. The color of the bark is usually a blackish tone. The bark of this tree was once peeled, dries, pounded to powder, and the dye sifted.

### 3. Black Cherry

(*Prunus Serotina*)



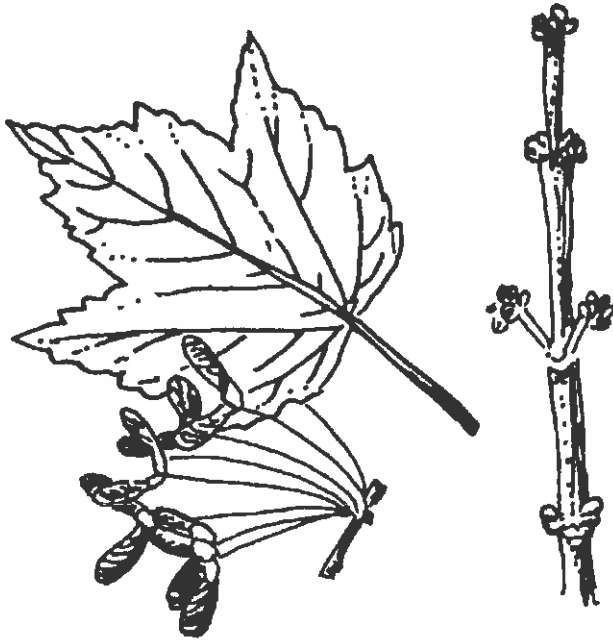
The Black Cherry tree is quite different from other trees you've seen. The bark on this tree is dark grey and smooth with horizontal lines. If you'd like to, feel the bark to compare it with the rough, scaly bark of the elm and oaks.

This tree has an aroma to it. The smell comes from the many small, white flowers and the small dark-red cherries which give the tree its name. These crushed flowers and cherries, along with the bark, have a distinctive cherry-like odor and bitter taste. It can be an important food source for wildlife and humans alike.

This widespread species is the largest and most important cherry tree. The wood is used in many things such as furniture, and even food. Just think about it the next time you eat jelly on your toast or take wild cherry cough syrup, it may have been made from a tree just like this one!

#### 4. Red Maple

(*Acer Rubrum*)



Welcome to stop four, the Red Maple. This large tree has a narrow compact crown. Besides ornate leaves, it may also be covered with red flowers or fruit. It is common to see this tree in wet or moist soils, and mixed hardwood forests. The bark of the Red Maple is grey and thin in appearance. The bark is smooth to-the-touch, but may turn into long, thin, scaly ridges as the tree matures.

Most noticeable about this tree are the twigs, which are slender and reddish in color. The Red Maple also has the greatest North-South distribution of all tree species along the East Coast. It thrives in many habitats! Pioneers once used this tree to make ink and other dyes from a bark extract.



## 5. White Spruce

(Picea Glauca)

If snow is on the ground, (and if you are lucky) you might be able to see various kinds of wildlife, including deer, rabbits, and grouse at this next stop. Take a minute and quietly look around.

The White Spruce has rows of horizontal branches that form a conical crown. If you crush these needles, they will send out a skunk-like smell, which explains why this trees nickname is the “skunk spruce.’

These evergreen trees have a fruit in the shape of a cone –which you probably know as a pine cone. These cones are light brown and cylindrical. They are found hanging on the ends of the long branches.

This tree is very important in making products. In fact, if you have a piano, or violin, it is probably made from a tree like this one.

## 6. Quaking Aspen



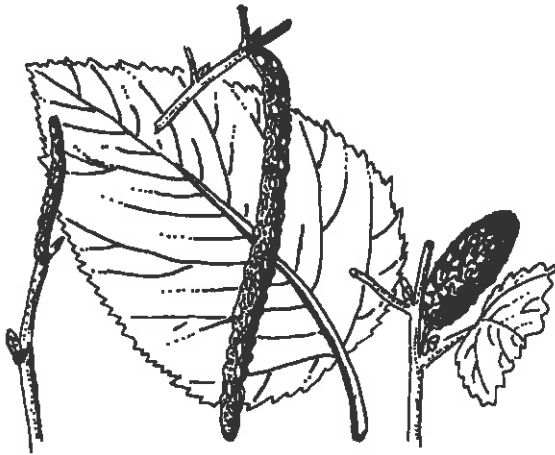
(*Populus Tremuloides*)

Stop six brings you to the Quaking Aspen. This tree is the most widely distributed tree in North America. The tear dropped shaped leaves are a shiny dark green on top and a dull light green underneath. If you are viewing this tree in the fall, the leaves may have changed to a golden yellow color.

The bark of the Quaking Aspen is white and smooth to the touch. This tree can be found in many soil types-especially along sandy, gravelly slopes. The name Quaking Aspen refers to the motion of the leaves in a gentle breeze. This is because the Quacking Aspen has a flat leaf petiole instead of the typical conical shape. Mammals including deer, elk, moose, beaver, and rabbits may feed on the foliage.

## 7. Paper Birch

(*Betula Papyrifera*)

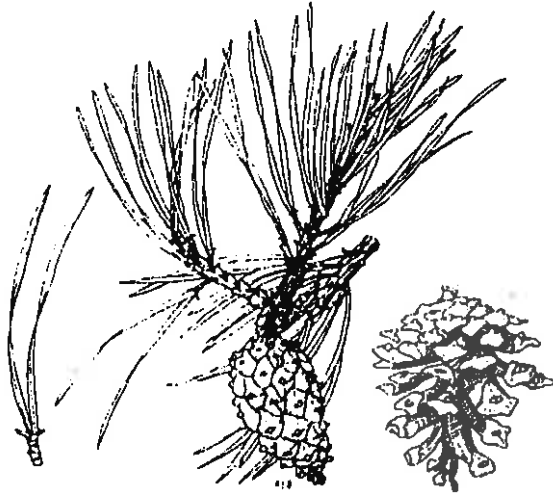


Now what is the first difference you notice about this next tree? It is probably the white, smooth, paper-like bark that gives this tree its name, the "Paper Birch." This tall, narrow tree is probably one of the most beautiful native trees. In the spring, the tree bears flowers; and in the fall, it bears cones like pine trees.

The wood is used for ice cream sticks, toothpicks, clothespins, and even some of the toys kids play with. In the past, native Americans used the wood from this tree to make canoes, which is why this tree's nickname is the "Canoe Birch." Look around on the ground for a fallen, dead log of birch. Take some paper bark home with you. But, be careful! Picking from a living tree will give the tree permanent black scars.

## 8. Scotch Pine

(*Pinus Sylvestris*)



The Scotch Pine, stop eight, is a large tree that has a rich blue-green foliage. The bark of this tree is a reddish brown color and quite thin. As the tree ages, the bark becomes more grey of a color and sheds off papery (scaly) plates.

The Scotch Pine can be found in various soils from loams to sands. If you can, locate clusters of needles and compare them to the display case. This tree is native of the Scottish highlands, and is the most widely distributed tree in the world. Scotch Pines are commonly grown for shelterbelts, ornaments, and Christmas trees.

## 9. Jack Pine

(*Pinus banksiana*)



Although the Jack Pine is a rather unattractive tree to look at, it is a strong and important species. The Jack Pine is a pioneer species after fires, and logging, although they may be damaged. The long pointed cones that curve upward usually remained closed for many years until they are opened by heat, fire, or sun exposure after a cutting. These types of cones are referred to as serotinous cones. The scraggly appearance is due to the spreading of branches of short needles that grow randomly in pairs on these branches.

This tree is very important in north central Michigan (and possibly central Wisconsin), where the Kirtland Warbler breeds. Kirtland Warblers are very dependent on the new-growth Jack Pine for breeding habitat, and adequate food supply.

## 10. White Oak

(Quercus Alba)

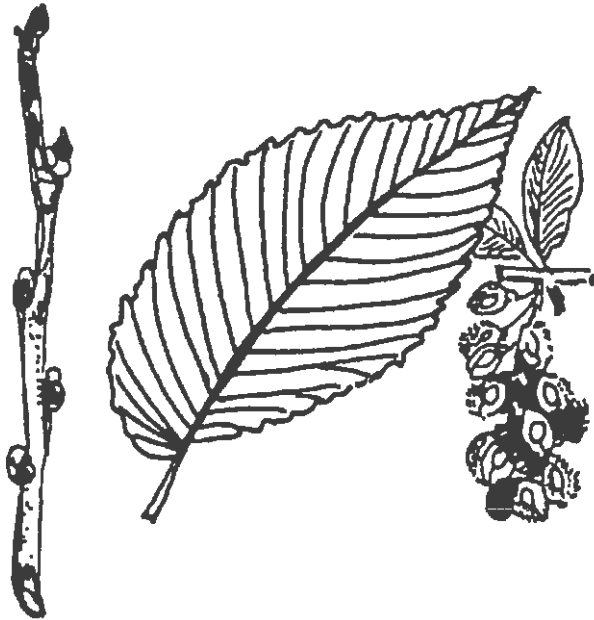


This next stop is a tree that you probably come in contact with every day, and don't even know it. The White Oak is the most important lumber tree in the oak family, and is used in making different kinds of furniture. Sometimes the White Oak is called the "Stave Oak" because the wood is excellent for making tight barrels used to hold liquids. It thrives in well drained rich soils, primarily of southern Wisconsin.

If you look up, you'll notice the widespread branches that make up the top of the tree, also called the crown. If you look at the trunk of the tree, you'll find that they often stout, horizontal, irregularly divided branches. If there are no green leaves in this tree, look for red or brown leaves around the base of the tree. Often times, many of the leaves remain attached throughout the winter months.

## 11. American Elm

(Ulmus Americana)



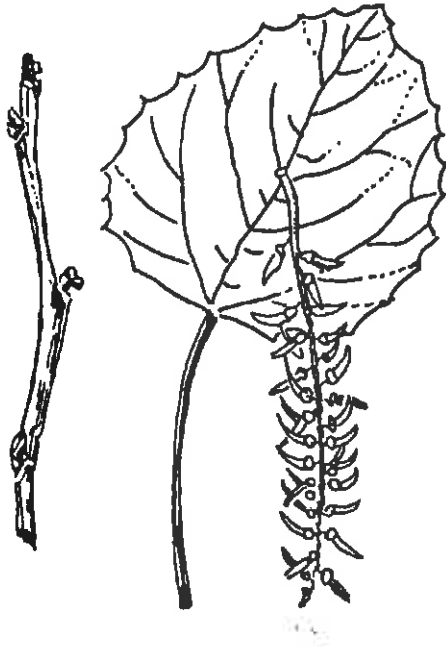
Stop 11 is the American Elm. This large, handsome, and graceful tree can be found in moist soils, usually in valleys and flood plains.

If you are experiencing this tree in late summer, or early fall, look for a few leaves round the base of the tree. Compare these trees to the pictures in the display case. If you're experiencing this tree in spring, you can see clusters of green buds on the branches.

The American Elm was in danger of extinction in the 1930's by a disease spread by beetles called "Dutch Elm." Many urban forests were lost due to this devastating disease. Dutch Elm disease is still a problem today.

## 12. Large-Tooth Aspen

(*Populus Grandidentata*)



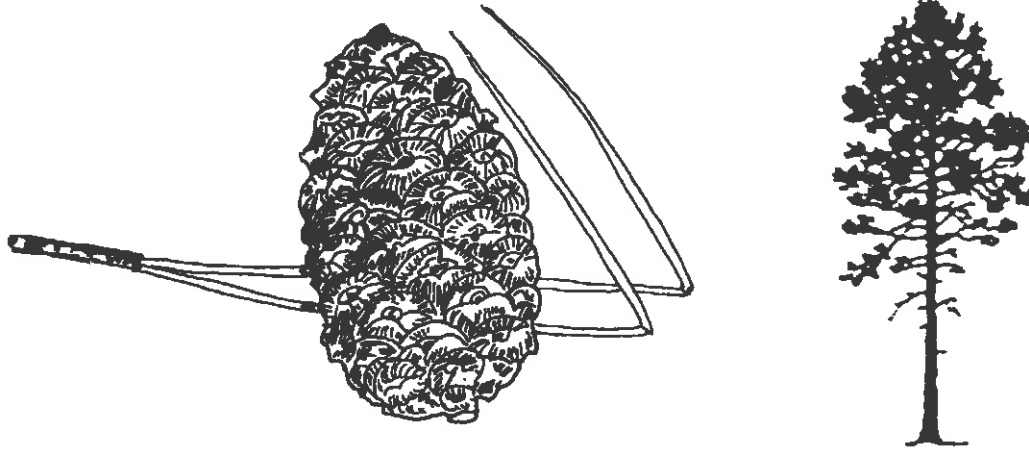
Your next stop is a tree that may look similar to one you've already seen. The Large-Tooth ("Big Tooth") Aspen can be easily distinguished from the Quaking Aspen by the large curved teeth of the dark green leaf edges. You may want to pick up a leaf and compare it to the Quaking Aspen leaf on your way out of the school forest.

The foliage, twig buds, and bark of this tree are all consumed by wildlife. If you get a closer look you may be able to see signs of gnawing by animals on the greenish-brown, smooth bark, the brownish catkin flowers, or the long, light-green cotton seeded fruit.



### 13. Red Pine

(*Pinus Resinosa*)

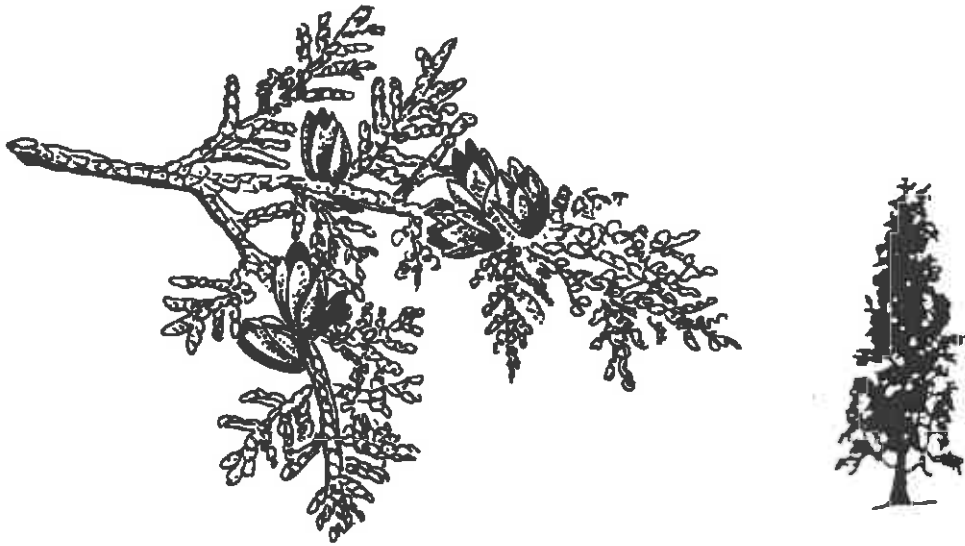


Stop 13 is the red, or Norway pine, although Norway pine is “technically” incorrect because this is an American species, not European. This tree has reddish brown, or grayish bark with broad, flat plates that become thicker each year. This tree is found in well drained soils and mixed forests.

One of the unusual reasons that this tree can be found here, is because this area is considered a transitional area from the northern hardwoods to the southern softwoods. The Red Pine is used in rough construction, pulp wood, and milled lumber products.

## 14. White Cedar

(Thuja Occidentalis)

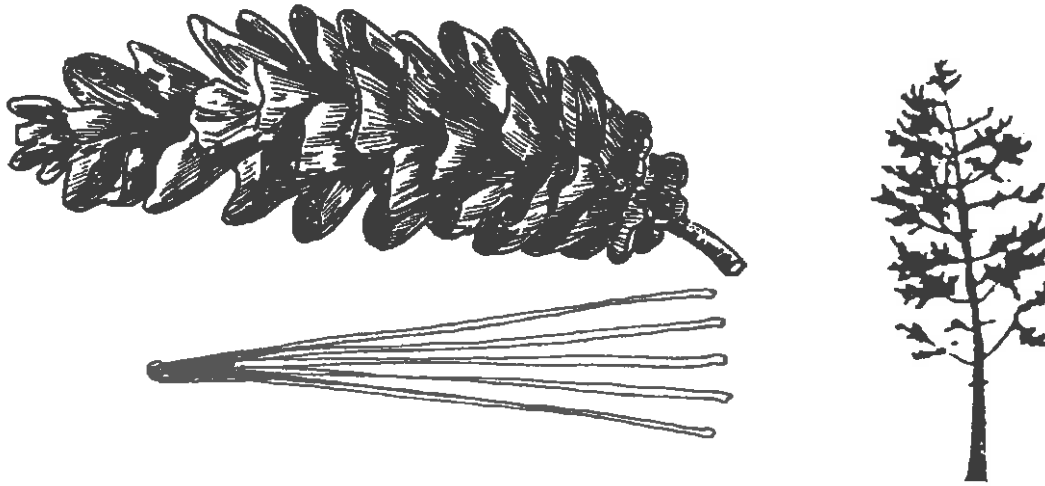


Stop 14 is the White Cedar. The bark of this tree is pale red-brown, thin, and shreddy. The wood is light, soft, and fragrant. The evergreen leaves are a dull yellow-green on top and a pale blue-green underneath.

The White Cedar is adapted to swamps and to neutral or alkaline soils. This tree was discovered by French explorers and grown in Paris as early as 1536. Vitamin C made from its bark was used to save the crew of Jacques Cartiers from scurvy. It can be an important winter food source for deer and rabbits. This tree grows slowly and could possibly reach 400 years of age. Today, the wood is used mainly for poles, cross-ties, posts, and lumber.

## 15. White Pine

(Pinus Strobus)

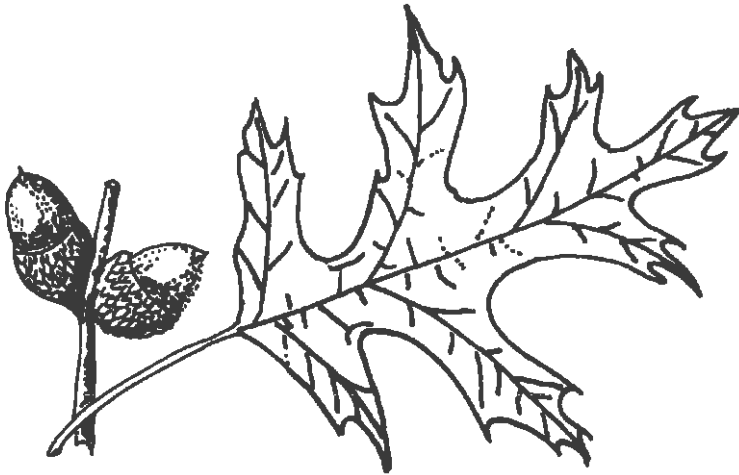


This stop brings you to the largest and most magnificent pine tree – and you can see why. The long, straight trunk, with grey, deeply furrowed bark bears a crown of horizontal branches. One row or whorl gets added to the tree each year. The most distinguishable characteristic of the tree is that its evergreen needles grow in branches of five; one for every letter of its name: W-H-I-T-E.

This tree is used in construction, millwork, trim, and pulpwood. The tall straight trunks were often used as ship masts in early times. Wisconsin's original lumber industry was based primarily on white pines, as they were key components of the original northern forests. Many of the red barns that dot the Midwest have lumber from Wisconsin white pines, and an whole timber industry through the central part of Wisconsin was built around these trees. Today, most of the original giants are gone, but the tree remains vital to our economy and forest ecosystems.

## 16. Pin Oak

(*Quercus Ellipsoidalis*)



Welcome to stop 16, the Pin Oak. This beautiful tree has a straight trunk and a broadly conical crown. The leaves of a Pin Oak have deep lobes, almost to the mid-vein, with a few bristle-tipped teeth. The top side is a shiny dark green, and a light green beneath. If you are viewing this tree in the fall, the leaves may be red, or possibly brown.

The bark of the Pin oak is a gray color, smooth to the touch, but smooth throughout. This tree is often transplanted because the fibrous root lacks tap roots.

The major oak species in the school forest is Pin Oak. It does well in well drained sandy soils. It is a dominant species in northern hardwood forests in Wisconsin.

## 17. Norway Spruce

(*Picea Abies*)



This Norway spruce, with its straight trunk and pyramid shaped crown of spreading branches and evergreen needles, may remind you a lot of the Christmas tree you put in your house. This tree has reddish-brown scaly, bark and twigs; cylindrical, toothed cones; and grows in moist soils and cold regions – like Wisconsin!

Native to far Northern Europe, the Norway spruce has been widely used for shade, shelterbelts on fields, and forest plantations. The large, light brown cones are the largest of the family. This tree also grows in many different varieties so that no two trees really look the same. There are trees with drooping branches, ones that are dwarfed, and some have yellowish needles.

## 18. Bur Oak

(*Quercus Macrocarpa*)

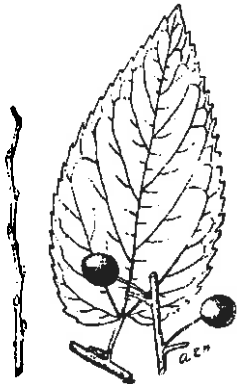


Stop 18 is the Bur Oak. This common hardwood is well known for its crown and beautiful stout trunk. The bark of the Bur Oak is light gray in color and rough to the touch. The bark is also deeply furrowed in to scaly ridges. It is adapted to withstand periodic fires associated with traditional prairie-oak savannah habitats which originally covered major areas of Wisconsin.

In the fall, the leaves of this tree change from a shiny dark green to a dull yellow or brown. This tree can be found in many areas from dry uplands on lime stone to moist flood plains of streams. In the west, the Bur Oak is a pioneer tree, bordering and invading the grasslands. Most Bur Oaks are planted for shade, ornament, and shelterbelts. They are slow growing and very long lived.

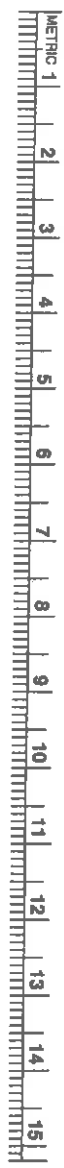
## 19. Hackberry

(*Celtis Occidentalis*)



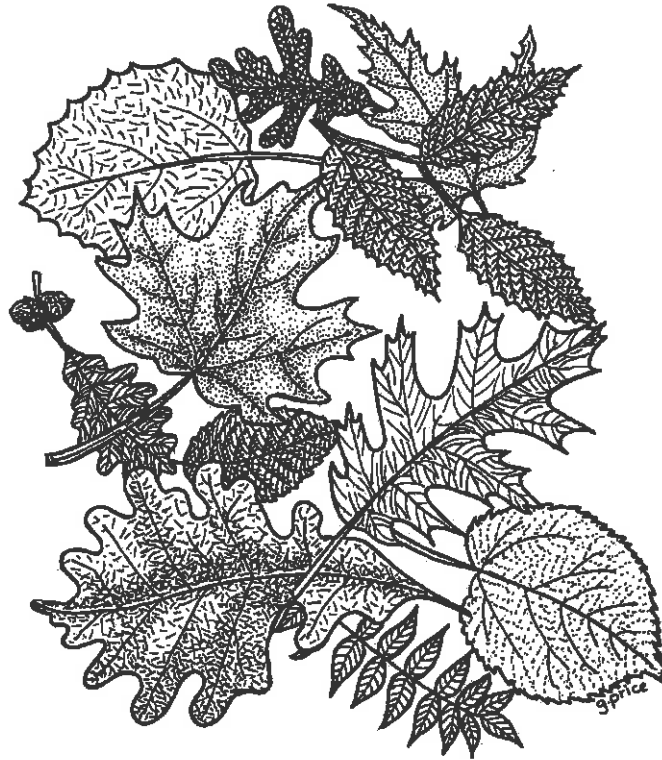
The last stop brings you to the Hackberry tree. The tree is found sparingly in the southern and western parts of Wisconsin. The leaves are ovate, and sharply toothed toward the end of the leaf. The Hackberry contains a berry like drupe, which is thin, and has purple skin. This fruit is sometimes called the "Sugar Berry."

The bark of this tree is grayish brown, with short corky ridges. This tree can be found in many soil types, especially rich soils. The wood is used in the manufacturing of furniture, fuel, and only occasionally for lumber. To date, this is the only Hackberry found in the school forest. How it got there, no one knows for sure. It may have been brought in by migrating birds, or tree harvesting equipment.





For answers to your questions or for additional  
resources and information regarding the  
**Tri-County School Forest**, please contact:

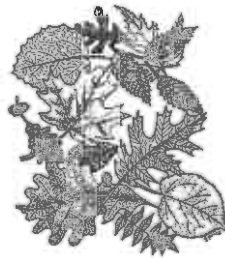


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