

PATON SCHOOL NATURE TRAIL

**Field Guide and Instructional Suggestions
Created by Lisa Papazian and Kara Frankian**

TIPS WHILE ON THE TRAIL

- Establish norms and expected behaviors BEFORE you go. Clear signals and expectations for how to treat nature
- Encourage students to listen and observe carefully when on the trail.
- They can make “coyote ears” by cupping their ears while on the trail and will be able to hear more clearly.
- Allow students to bring ipads out to take photos of what they observe on the trail. You can reflect these in the classroom and have some great conversations.
- Go out often - maybe once a week to observe changes - in all seasons and types of weather.
- Designate one day of the week for trail day - students should be prepared with boots for muddy days



TIPS WHEN RETURNING FROM TRAIL



- Check for ticks when coming back to the building
- Have students wash their hands and rinse their faces and hair to assist children with pollen allergies
- For students who have severe seasonal allergies, ask for an extra shirt - they can change into it when coming back from the trail to reduce the irritation from the pollen

POISON IVY

This is growing
along the trail in
many areas. Remember,
“Leaves of 3 let it be.”
“Brown and hairy be very weary”
It’s still poisonous
even in the dormant
state



CHOKEBERRY TREE

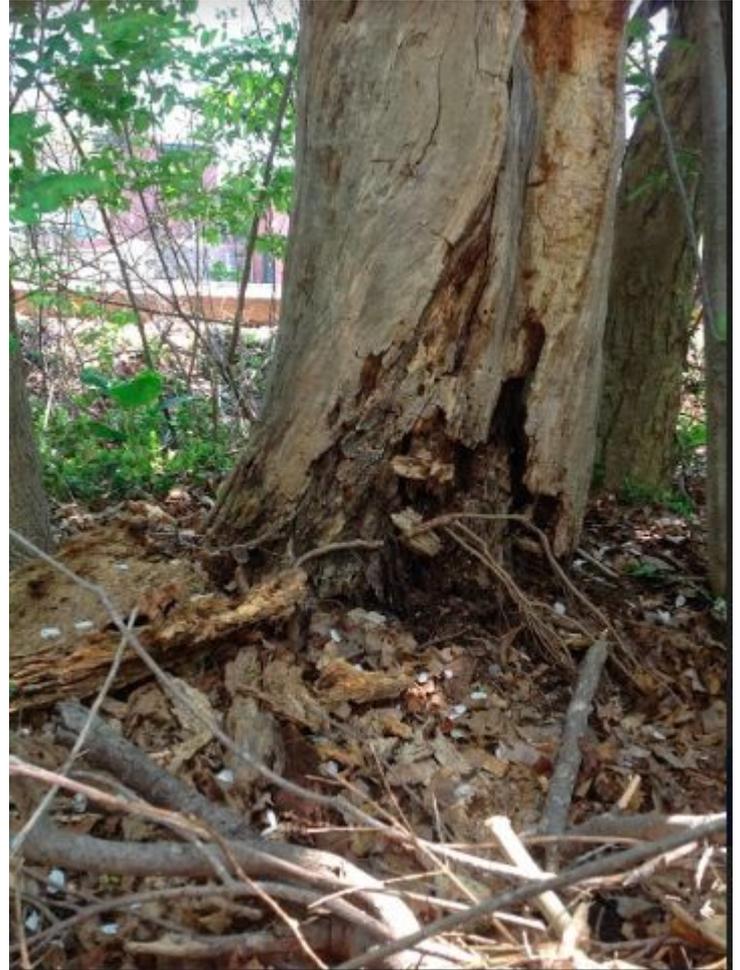
You can observe the different cycles - small red buds, flowers turn into berries which are seeds.



DEAD TREE STUMP

Rot has been caused by a variety of bugs: carpenter ants, bark beetle and termites may cause this type of damage.

The tree is beginning to turn to sawdust.



FERNS

Starts out as
curled up
plants and then
leaves unfurl.

Ferns reproduce
with spores found
on the back of
leaves.



WILD GERANIUM

Will have pink flowers.

Grows throughout the trail.

Flowers in late May.



SHAG BARK HICKORY TREE

This tree gets its name from the “shaggy” look to its bark.

Hickory nuts can be found around the base - food for squirrels. Edible for humans.



OWL HOUSE

If you look up into the trees you will notice an owl house mounted high up. This is probably occupied by squirrels now.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

This flower grows in mostly wet areas. You can notice a long leaf stem standing up next to the flower.

The flower curls over the stamen for protection.



TREE ROOT SYSTEM

This tree once stood on the nature trail but has since died and fallen over. You can see the complicated root system.



MAPLE LEAVES

This cluster of maple leaves have sprouted from one bud located at the base. If you rub the leaves they will feel differently as they grow (soft when young, rough when older).



MAPLE FLOWERS

These flowers fall from the
Maple tree and the leaves
will sprout in their place.



GRAPE VINES

There are grape vines growing along the trail. The leaves start small and fuzzy. In the fall you will be able to smell the grapes before you see them.



JEWEL WEED

This plant is growing all along the trail.
The seed pod it develops is very sensitive
and will disperse seeds easily
when touched by a passing animal.



SKUNK CABBAGE

This is growing all along the nature trail in the wetlands. It starts out as a small purple spike and round flower. When the leaves are broken it smells like a skunk.



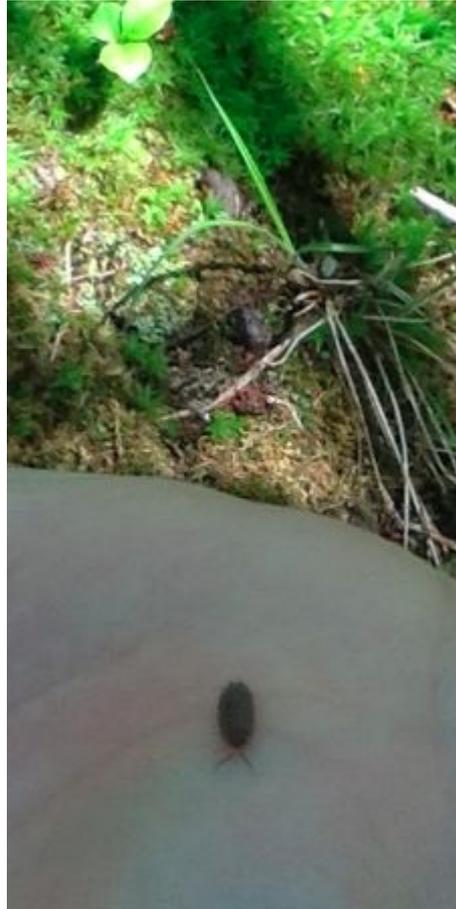
SMALL POOLS IN THE STREAM

There is flowing water on the nature trail. This is a great connection to erosion and deposition. If you look closely at the small pools that have gathered you may find frogs or crayfish.



LIFE IN THE MOSS

There are moss covered rocks all along the trail. If you look closely you can see all different types of life including woodlice and other creatures. Moss reproduces with tiny spores.



MAPLE TREE LIFE CYCLE

The maple tree starts as a seed, or a key. This produces flowers which turn to buds and then to leaves.



ROTTING TREE WITH NEW LIFE

This rotting tree represents different parts of the life cycle. In the middle of the hollowed out, dead tree there is new life sprouting from the sawdust. You can see jewelweed growing from the inside of this dead trunk. There is also a root system sprouting from the base of the original tree.



DYING TREE = WOODPECKERS

This tree along the trail has been infested by different bugs and is losing its bark. It is filled with tiny holes - evidence of woodpecker activity.



BITTERSWEET

Bittersweet is an invasive species that is growing along the trail. It twists into a vine and will wrap itself around trees and other plants that are growing, destroying the plants. In the fall it produces orange and yellow berries.



UNDER THE LOGS

If you roll back a log you might find something interesting. Here is a centipede living under the log as well as a pill bug, or rolly polli. Be sure to put these creatures back after exploring and return the log, too.



OLD MAPLE FLOWERS

Lying on top of large rocks along the trail you may find red debris. These are old maple flowers which have fallen after the .



CINNAMON FERN

We have many different types of ferns growing along the trail, and they often grow together.

You can see a green fern but also a brown, stiff fern. This is called a cinnamon fern because it resembles a cinnamon plant.



VIRGINIA CREEPER

You may see this plant growing along trees or even on the boardwalk of the nature trail. It has five leaves and it's shiny. It is NOT POISONOUS!



MICA

This rock has mica deposits.
Mica is a shiny mineral that
is part of many rocks.



ALGAL BLOOM

In the bottom of the stream, you can see algae blooming due to sunlight and nutrients in the water.



TREES INFESTED WITH ANTS

These trees have been infested with carpenter ants. the ants have eaten holes throughout the trees. You can observe them crawling in and out of the holes.



FOOTPRINTS IN THE MUD

In the middle of the stream
you can see evidence of
different wildlife - footprints
of birds and other creatures.



MAPLE LEAF WITH WINTER WORM

This maple leaf has been infested with winter worm, which eats away at the leaf. This worm will seal itself in the maple leaf and eventually destroy the plant.



SQUIRREL DREY

Up in the top of some trees you may see something that looks like a bird's nest. It's actually the home for a squirrel - called a drey.



YEW

Most of the plants along the trail are deciduous, but there is one coniferous tree growing along the trail - a yew tree.



SEEDLINGS

Seedlings are sprouting all along the nature trail. Here is a maple seedling and a coniferous seedling. Notice the resemblance to the parent plants and adult plants they will become.



BEE POLLINATING A FLOWER

There are many bees pollinating flowers along the trail. This bee is pollinating a choke cherry tree which is found bordering the trail and the playground.



BARK BEETLES

This fallen tree has been infested by bark beetles. When the bark is destroyed they create patterns on the outside of the tree.



LICHEN

You can see lichen growing on trees throughout the trail and on broken tree branches littering the trail.



BERRIES

These berries, visible in the spring, are left over from last year's fall. It's interesting to see evidence of the different parts of the life cycle.



BARBERRY BUSH

This bush has berries on the underside of its branches.

It is considered an invasive species - not native to this area.



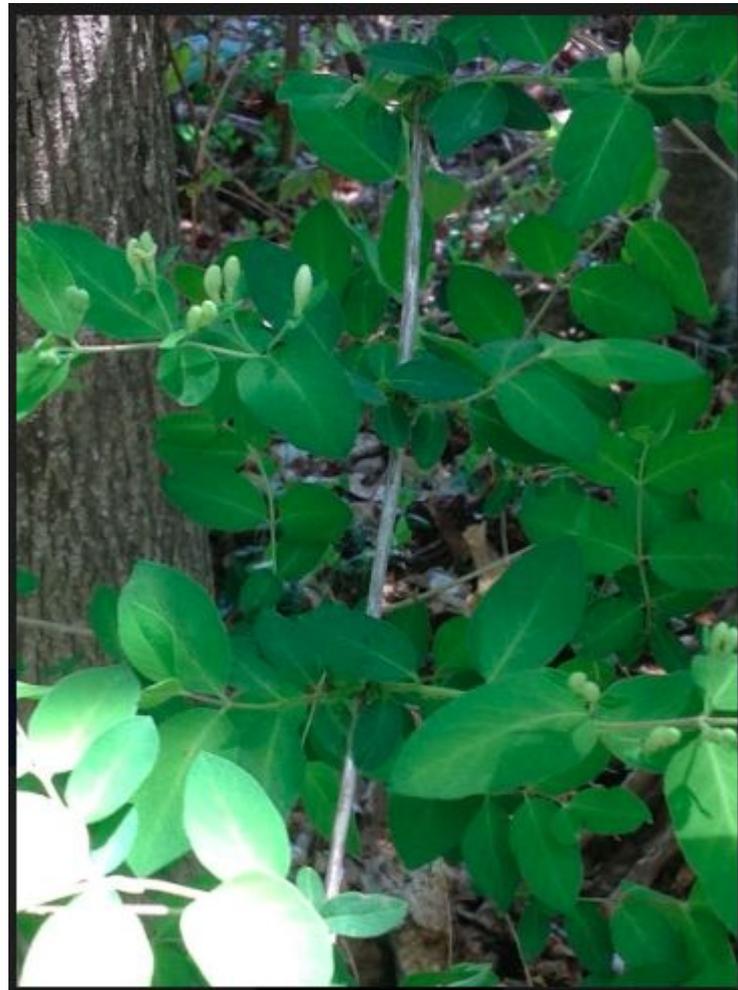
WILD CARROT

Growing along the edge of the nature trail near the basketball hoop is wild carrot. These frilly leaves hold a carrot below them.



UNKNOWN BUD

Will eventually turn into flower



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This flower grows
amid the skunk cabbage
along the trail.

