

How to use the trail guide

This guide describes common trees found along the nature trail. For each tree, the most accepted common name is listed. Next, the scientific name which is standard worldwide is given. Various other commonly used names for the tree may be listed. You may see text in red which denotes a caution about that tree.

Quick ID: This section gives characteristics to look for such as leaf type, leaf margins, bark color, tree height, etc.. Each page will also contain an image of the tree.

Note: Not all trees on the trail are included in this guide.

Stops

Stop 1 – Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.)

Stop 2 – Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans* L.)

Stop 3 – Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua* L.)

Stop 4 – Water Oak (*Quercus nigra* L.)

Stop 5 – Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos* L.)

Stop 6 – Chinese Tallowtree (*Triadica sebifera* L.)

Stop 7 – Muscadine Grape (*Vitis rotundifolia* Michx.)

Stop 8 – Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra* L.)

Stop 9 – Mockernut Hickory (*Carya tomentosa* (Poir.) Nutt.)

Stop 10 – Winged Elm (*Ulmus alata* Michx.)

Stop 11 – Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum* Nutt.)

Stop 12 – Red Maple (*Acer rubrum* L.)

Stop 13 – Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica* Marsh)

Stop 14 – Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida* L.)

Stop 15 – Southern Red Oak (*Quercus falcata* Michx.)

Stop 16 – Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda* L.)

Stop 17 – American Holly (*Ilex opaca* Ait.)

Stop 18 – Cherry-laurel (*Prunus caroliniana* Mill.)

Stop 19 – American Elm (*Ulmus americana* L.)

Stop 20 – Greenbrier (*Smilax* spp.)

Stop 21 – Common Privet (*Ligustrum japonicum* Thunb.)

Stop 22 – Eastern Red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana* L.)

Stop 23 – Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* L.)



Black Cherry
(*Prunus serotina* Ehrh.)
ROSEACEAE



Black Mountain Cherry, Rum Cherry

This tree was widely used by the early pioneers. Its bark was made into a cough remedy and the fruit was used as a flavoring extract or mixed with sugar or honey to make pies, jellies, and jams. *Do not eat the seeds as they contain highly toxic hydrocyanic acid.* Black cherry is food for many wildlife although the foliage is considered to be poisonous to livestock. Black cherry is a very desired wood.

Quick ID:

Simple, alternate leaves with finely toothed (serrate) leaf margins. Look for reddish hairs on mid-vein on the back side of leaf. Bark is striped horizontally with gray lenticels.



Black Cherry

Poison Ivy

(*Toxicodendron radicans* L.)

ANACARDIACEAE

poison oak, poison sumac

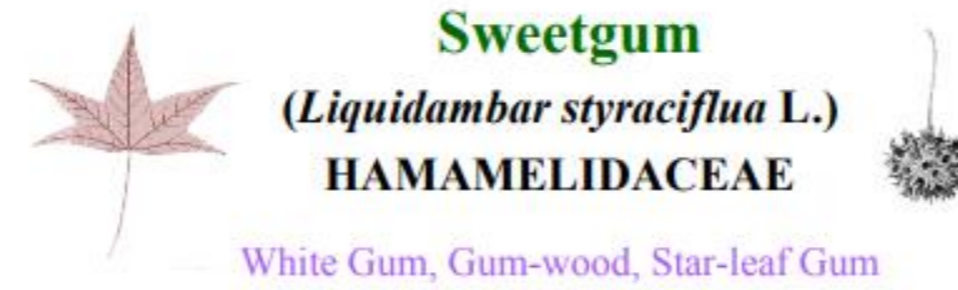
Eighty-five percent of the people exposed to poison ivy will develop an allergic reaction. Usually, sensitivity develops only after several encounters with the plants, sometimes over many years. However, sensitivity may occur after only one exposure. The rash is caused by a chemical in the sap called urushiol. Stems or leaves broken by the wind or animals, and even the tiny holes made by chewing insects release urushiol. It can stick to pets, garden tools, or anything it comes in contact with and may remain potent for years.

Quick ID:

Poison ivy may be a woody, ropelike vine, a trailing shrub on the ground, or a free-standing shrub. Leaves normally tripinnately compound. Leaves are green in the summer and red in the fall. Flowers greenish-white. Berries white.



Poison Ivy



Sweetgum

(*Liquidambar styraciflua* L.)

HAMAMELIDACEAE

White Gum, Gum-wood, Star-leaf Gum

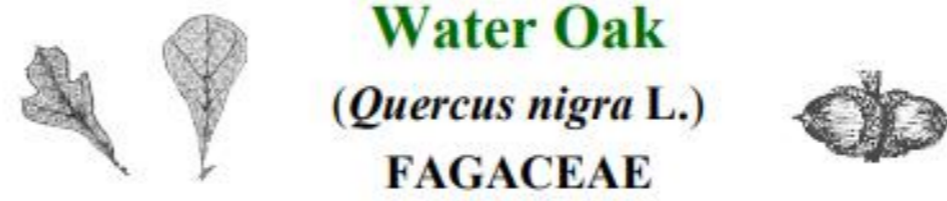
Sweetgum is one of the most common trees in Southern forests. Often it is the first tree growing in cleared areas. Its resin has long been used for medicinal purposes, and its resin (sap) has a sweet taste and can be chewed like gum (hence the name sweetgum). It is a rapidly growing, long-lived tree that has beautiful color variations of red and yellow in autumn. It is also gaining popularity in reforestation projects because of its rapid growth on cutover lands and its use in making paper.

Quick ID:

It's easy to recognize its simple, alternate, star-shaped (palmately lobed) leaves and its spiny fruit. Often the twigs and branches will have corky wings. Large tree reaching 100 feet or more.



Sweetgum



Water Oak

(*Quercus nigra* L.)

FAGACEAE

Pin Oak, Spotted Oak, Possum Oak

This tree is typical in low woods or stream banks. The species name, *nigra*, refers to the black bark. This oak has gained popularity and is extensively planted as a shade tree in this region. Its wood is commonly used for fuel, lumber, poles, and cross ties. Of the oaks, which are generally slow growing, water oak is relatively fast growing.

Quick ID:

Water oak can attain a height of 80 feet. Look for the tight dark bark with gray banding. The leaves are spatulate. That is, shaped like little spatulas or spoons. Be careful, leaves on young trees look much different (deeply, bristle-tipped lobes) and might be mistaken for southern red oak



Water Oak



Willow Oak
(*Quercus phellos* L.)
FAGACEAE



Pin Oak, Peach Oak, Cork Oak, Swamp Oak,

The species name, *phellos*, means cork. Willow Oak is often called Pin Oak in the South. Although the name is reserved for the true Pin Oak, *Q. palustris*, common in the North East and not native to Texas. The wood is inferior to other commercial oaks in the region but is often still used for fuel and general construction. The acorns are an important food mast for wild turkey, quail, birds, and squirrel.

Quick ID:

Large tree up to 125 feet tall and 6 feet in diameter. Leaves are deciduous, alternate, simple, and linear-lanceolate (long and narrow like a sword or lance). Typically grows on rich, wet, clay-loam, bottom lands. Look for the bristle-tipped leaf.



Willow Oak

Tallowtree

(*Triadica sebifera* L.)

EUPHORBIACEAE

Tallow-tree, Chinaberry

You don't really see too many Chinese Tallowtrees in the northern parts of Texas. The tree suffers freeze damage, wood borers, cotton root rot and other diseases that limit its numbers. Nevertheless, it is planted extensively as an ornamental because of its quick growth and attractive red and yellow fall colors. Its clusters of hard white, mature seeds as well as the immature greenish seeds are potentially toxic.

Quick ID:

This is a fast-growing, short-lived, poor-quality shade tree. Leaves are deciduous, simple, and alternate. The deltoid or diamond shaped leaves have entire margins, and the leaf tip tapers to a long point.



Chinese
Tallowtree



Muscadine Grape

(*Vitis rotundifolia* Michx.)

VITACEAE

Grape, Wild Grape



Texas has more than a dozen species of grapes. Muscadine grape, however, is the most famous. The juicy, sweet, purple to black fruit grows in abundance from midsummer to late fall. You can use any of the Texas grapes for juice to jelly, though sweetness varies from vine to vine. One grape, Mustang grape, bears fruit so pungent that it can irritate your hands while picking. **Be careful not to confuse grape with similar but inedible fruits.**

Quick ID:

Grapes have simple, alternate, heart-shaped or broadly ovate leaves; the leaf margins are toothed, or lobed, with dense wooly hairs underneath. Grapevines do not have spines.



Muscadine Grape



Red Mulberry

(*Morus rubra* L.)

MORACEAE



Mulberry, Black Mulberry, Morea

The oblong fruits of mulberries resemble raspberries and blackberries. Mulberry has red (*rubra*) immature fruit that are purple when ripe. The fruit can be tasty, but is not often used. Use mulberries fresh on cereal or ice cream, or boil them down for jelly or preserves. The fibrous bark was used to make cloth by early Indians. **Try this:** To cold water, add berries and crush. Strain the mixture through cheesecloth and sweeten to your taste.

Quick ID:

Red mulberry is a small- to medium-sized tree. Leaves are alternate, simple and have toothed margins. The leaves may be unlobed, deeply lobed on one side, resembling a mitten, or lobed on both sides. Leaf margins are crenate or serrate.



Red Mulberry

Mockernut Hickory

(*Carya tomentosa* (Poir.) Nutt.)



Juglandaceae

Whitebark, Bigbud, Bullnut, or Fragrant Hickory

This tree is easily identified by its large, hairy terminal buds. In fact, the species name actually refers to the hairs on the terminal bud and leaves. This hickory prefers mesic to dry ridges and hillsides. The aromatic foliage is occasionally browsed by deer, and the nuts are consumed by many species of birds, wood duck, woodpecker, fox, squirrels, beaver, rabbits, turkey, mice, deer, and others. The nut is sweet but is not used as commonly as others (pecan, walnut) in the walnut family.

Quick ID:

Leaves are alternate, deciduous, odd-pinnately compound (5-9 leaflets), strongly fragrant when crushed. Twigs stout, grayish brown, and hairy when young. Buds are distinctively large. Bark has tight interlaced ridges that form a netlike pattern.



Mockernut Hickory



Winged Elm
(*Ulmus alata* Michx.)
ULMACEAE



Cork Elm, Water Elm, Red Elm, Witch Elm,
Wahoo Elm

Alata refers to the corky wings on the twigs. Winged elm is a favorite shade and ornamental tree. It is easily transplanted. It sprouts readily from seed; it grows relatively rapid, and it is relatively free of disease and insects. The wood makes excellent tool handles and agricultural implements. In some areas, the bark was used for baling twine.

Quick ID:

Tree attaining a height of 60 feet. Its slender branches often have conspicuous corky wings. Leaves are simple, alternate, deciduous, lanceolate, coarse, and doubly serrate on margin.



Winged Elm



Sassafras
(*Sassafras albidum* Nutt.)

LAURACEAE

Cinnamon-wood, Smelling-stick, Saloop

Sassafras tea has been a favorite for more than 400 years. Florida Indians first introduced the tree to the Spanish in the 1500s. Sassafras was the first cash crop of the Virginia colony. It was exported to Europe for its reported “cure-all” purposes. The tea is brewed from the bark of the roots which has a root beer aroma. Dried leaves are powdered into filé, a creole spice used in gumbo. Today, sassafras is used for flavoring medicines, tobacco, root beer, soaps, toothpaste, gum, and perfumes.

Quick ID:

Like red mulberry, three variations of the oval leaves appear on a single tree but the leaf margins are entire and the twigs are greenish.



Sassafras



Red Maple
(*Acer rubrum* L.)
ACERACEAE



Scarlet Maple, Swamp Maple, Soft Maple,
Shoe-peg Maple

Red maple is a common species of the forests of eastern North America, ranging as far south as Florida and as far west as East Texas. It is widely planted as a shade tree. This maple gets its name from the bright red twigs, buds, flowers, immature fruits, and leaf stalks (petioles). In fact, *rubrum* literally means "red."

Quick ID:

Beautiful tree attaining a height of 90 feet with a narrow rounded crown. Bark light gray and smooth. Leaves deciduous, opposite and with 3 or 5 shallow lobes with parallel sides or tapered toward the tip. Leaf margin irregularly toothed. Leaf stalk or petiole is red.



Red Maple



Black-Gum
(*Nyssa sylvatica* Marsh.)
NYSSACEAE



Black Tupelo, Yellow Gum, Snagtree, Hornpipe, Sour Gum, Pepperridge, Bee Gum

This tree provides quality shade and good form but it is often overlooked as an excellent shade and ornamental tree. The wood is used for veneer, plywood, crossties, boxes, pulp, woodenware, and tool handles. The fruit is important to many species of birds. The foliage was browsed by black bear and white-tailed deer. Bees also love the flowers.

Quick ID:

Tree up to 100 feet tall. Leaves are glossy and dark green and are often clustered on dwarf branches (spur shoots) at the end of major shoots. The leaf margin is entire but sometimes it will have a single small tooth at the middle. Look for the distinctive 90 degree branching from the trunk.



Black Gum

Flowering Dogwood

(*Cornus florida* L.)

CORNACEAE

Boxwood, Cornelius-tree, White Cornel

Dogwood is a very common understory tree in East Texas forests. It is also planted extensively as a landscape ornamental primarily because of its very attractive, 4 large, white or pinkish, petal-like bracts (false flower petals that hide true greenish yellow flowers in dense clusters). The bright red berries and red autumn foliage also add to its splendor. The wood is hard, heavy and strong. So strong, in fact, that it is desired for fabric looms, turnery, handles, and forms. It is preferred food for birds, wild turkeys, squirrels and deer.

Quick ID:

Small tree up to 30 feet tall with a flat, spreading crown. Leaves are opposite, ovate and 3 to 5 inches long. Margin entire and sometime wavy. Leaf veins are prominent and follow the leaf margin. Twigs green and telescoping.



Flowering Dogwood



Southern Red Oak

(*Quercus falcata* Michx.)

FAGACEAE



Spanish Oak, Turkey Oak, Pagoda Oak,
Cherry-bark Oak

The species name, *falcata*, refers to the scythe-shaped leaves. The tree is often planted as an ornamental and the wood is used for many purposes. The bark is an excellent source for tannin and is used as an astringent in medicine. It has many variable shapes especially when young. Not all botanists agree to the exact status of its variations.

Quick ID:

A wonderful landscape tree with an open rounded crown reaching about 80 feet tall in North East Texas. Leaves are simple, alternate, deciduous, and quite variable. Generally, however, leaves will have 3-7 bristle-tipped lobes lobed.



Southern Red Oak



Loblolly Pine
(Pinus taeda L.)
PINACEAE



Black Pine, Bull Pine, Lowland Pine, Slack Pine Sap Pine,
Indian Pine, Swamp Pine

The species name, *taeda*, is for the resinous wood. The wood is used for lumber, poles, cooperage, pulp, boxes, crossties, posts, and fuel. Loblolly pine is the most valuable conifer in Texas, as in many southern states, and it is planted extensively in plantation settings. In 1998 as many as 153,000 acres were planted in loblolly pine. Texas has a total pine inventory of about 4 million acres (7.8 billion cubic feet) for a **combined stumpage value of over 600 million dollars.**

Quick ID:

Nice conifer that can attain a height of 120 feet. Leaves are persistent, needle-like and in clusters of 3 (rarely a few in pairs). Needles are light to dark green, 3-sided and 5-10 inches long.



Loblolly Pine

American Holly

(*Ilex opaca* Ait.)

AQUIFOLIACEAE

Yule Holly, Christmas Holly, White Holly

An East Texas evergreen, American holly's foliage and fruit are often used for holiday decorations. Leaves of this tree may also be used for tea but they do not contain caffeine. Cattle sometimes browse the leaves and many species of birds eat the fruit. Be careful, the leaves can be very sharp and stiff.

Quick ID:

An evergreen tree to 70 feet, with short crooked branches and a rounded or pyramidal crown. Leaves are thick, waxy, simple, alternate, persistent, ovate. Leaf margins are wavy and commonly stipulate (with sharp spines). Bark light to dark gray and smooth.



American Holly



Cherry-laurel (*Prunus caroliniana* Mill.)



ROSEACEAE

Wild Peach, Carolina Cherry-laurel,
Carolina Cherry

Try this: take a couple of leaves and crush them between your finger tips. Now smell. Does the aroma resemble that of Maraschino cherries? That's because the leaves of cherry laurel contain prussic acid which, by the way, has been shown to be injurious to livestock. However, a number of birds feed on the seeds. Also, the tree is widely cultivated as a ornamental and can be trained into hedges.

Quick ID:

Evergreen tree attaining a height of 40 feet. Leaves persistent, simple, alternate, dark green, shiny, and leathery. Leaf margin may be entire or toothed with a few remote spines.



Cherry- laurel



American Elm
(*Ulmus americana* L.)
ULMACEAE



White Elm, Rock Elm, Common Elm, Soft Elm, Swamp Elm

American Elm makes up the greater part of elm lumber and logs. It is known in the wood industry as White Elm. It is the largest and most graceful of the elms. It is a very desirable ornamental tree for street and park planting. Unfortunately, only a few large trees now exist in the Eastern U.S. Most have been killed by Dutch Elm disease, caused by a fungus, *Graphium ulmi*, and by a phloem necrosis caused by a virus. Advances have been made with clones that exhibit good form and some tolerance to the disease.

Quick ID:

A large beautiful tree up to 120 feet. Leaves simple, alternate, deciduous. Leaf margins coarsely and doubly serrate. Leaf base an inequilateral shape.



American Elm

Greenbrier

(*Smilax spp.*)

SMILACACEAE

Common Greenbrier, Stretchberry, Catbrier

If you have ever been snagged by this vine you can appreciate its various common names. The thorns are like the claws of cats. The succulent growing tips of the vines, as they emerge in the spring, furnish a delightful nibble for deer. The blue-black berries are not toxic. However, they are not considered edible. The berries are like rubber, hence the name "stretchberry" and they produce beautiful dyes for wool.

Quick ID:

With one exception, greenbriars are woody vines with spines scattered on the stem. Vine climbs with the help of tendrils. Leaves entire, lobed, or spiny.



Greenbrier

Japanese Privet

(*Ligustrum japonicum* Thunb.)

OLEACEAE

Roundleaf Privet, Glossy Privet, Common Privet,
Chinese Privet

This non-native shrub, originally native to China, Korea, and Japan, has been planted extensively as an ornamental. Commonly planted in warm regions, its compact shape and stiff short branches and leaves make it a perfect hedge. Since its introduction into cultivation in about 1860, common privet has escaped cultivation and is now considered with the native East Texas plants.

Quick ID:

Shrub to 20 feet tall. Leaves simple, opposite, evergreen and ovate-lanceolate. Leaf margin entire. Fruit a berry-like drupe, oblong, and blue-black.



Common Privet



Eastern Red-cedar

(*Juniperus virginiana* L.)

CUPRESSACEAE



Cedar, Red Savin, Carolina Cedar, Juniper -bush,
Pencil-wood Red Juniper

Have you ever had a cedar lined chest or closet. Often times the lining is Eastern Red-cedar. Beside the fact that it has a pleasant smell, its aromatic characteristic is considered to be a good insect repellent. That is, it keeps moths away. Extract of cedar oil has various commercial uses especially in perfumes. Ironically, Eastern Red-cedar is not a cedar at all...it belongs to the Juniper family.

Quick ID:

This is an evergreen tree of variable shape. Leaves are usually scale-like (successive pairs overlapping) and pointed with needle leaves present. Seed cones are berry-like, dark blue with a whitish powder.



Eastern Red-cedar



Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* L.)

FABACEAE

Redbud



Redbud is desired as a landscape shrub for its showy pink to purple spring flowers that contrast well with the white flower of dogwood. Strips of the red bark were used extensively for basket weaving by Native Americans. *Try this:* add the fresh flowers and flower buds to salads, breads, and pancakes. They have a pleasant, slightly sour flavor and are very high in vitamin C.

Quick ID:

Small tree, Look for leathery, reddish-brown seed pods (legumes). Leaves simple, alternate, and often shaped like a heart (cordate). Principal veins radiate from the leaf base. Bark smooth and gray



Eastern Redbud