

SOME INDIGENOUS FLORA
OF THE NATURE TRAIL
EAST HAMPTON, LONG ISLAND
NEW YORK



Science Department
East Hampton Public Schools
East Hampton, New York

The trees and plants listed here are just some of the indigenous flora found at the Nature Trail.

Information gathered and researched by Helen Iannone.

Also, invaluable assistance from Mrs. Barbara Hale and Mr. Anthony Minardi.

1. Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)

Dark purple and green sheathes of skunk cabbage appear in late winter. Flowers are encased in sheathes during early spring. The flowers resemble spiked white balls, and are rarely left uneaten by the inhabitants of the Trail. Common name derived from the plants offensive odor.

2. Swamp Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

A tree very common to moist areas. This red maple blooms before its leaves show. The flowers are red clusters blooming April-May. The double-winged fruit ride the breezes in late autumn.

3. Highbush Huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccta*)

Growing to a height of 4 feet, huckleberries produce beautiful bell-shaped, pink flowers May and June. Edible blue-black fruit ripens July-August. Birds of the Trail frequent these bushes during season.

4. White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

Soft blue-green needles of 5 distinguish the white pine. Bright yellow cones appear in early spring, but release seeds in September. Trees valued for their wood, and ornamental beauty.

5. False Lily-of-the-Valley (*Maianthemum canadense*)

Often, this wild lily has heart-shaped leaves, which appear singly in spring. May to July tiny flowers are white. The fruit is red-speckled; a pale berry edible to birds and ground rodents.

6. Reed (*Phragmites communis*)

Reeds are very fond of moist places, marshes, ditches and beaches. Instead of reproducing mainly by flowers (silky spikelets at top of stem) reeds send out underground rootstocks. Good for securing earth for flood control.

7. Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*)

Ferns spring from rootstocks April-May. The fertile sporanges identified by cinnamon brown wooly tufts appearing singly. The sterile fronds appear in full greenery mid-summer. Excellent garden plant for shaded moist area.

8. Juniper-Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

This fragrant, heartwood tree is common to dry hills or dense swamps. Flowers are cone-like structures at ends of twigs, pollination begins in April. Berries produced are bluish and are shed after first winter. Wood is useful for furniture and chests. Berries are used for flavoring gin.

9. Common Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Sterile stems emerge pale green with segmented branches to 2 feet high. Fertile stems appear in season brown or flesh-colored, and terminate in a cone-like spike. Horsetails are found in sterile or sandy soil, plants are rich in silica. Plant life of Carboniferous time appear very similar to the horsetail although many times larger. These plants formed ancient coal beds.

10. Alder-Smooth (*Alnus serrulata*)

Found close to waterways, alders are recognized by their rounded leaves which are jagged at the edges. Catkins, flowers, appear before leaves and hang from branches in yellow clusters. Nuts of two or three emerge in season.

11. Serviceberry-Shadblow (*Amelanchier arborea*)

A tree of medium height exhibits a bark of silvery-grey coloration with vertical streaks. White flowers bloom in clusters March-May before leaves appear. Small red or purple berries ripen July-August and are edible. Name shadbush, derived from association with the shad fish who are running at the time of flowering.

12. Wild Rose (*Rosa blanda*)

White or pink single blossoms in June and continue throughout the season. Rose hips are the fruit of the rose, and are rich in vitamin C.

13. Red Osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)

Twigs of this particular shrub are smooth, bright reddish, purple. Preferring moist soil, dogwood may reach a height of 10 feet. Flowers appear May-July in flat white clusters. Round berries either white or bluish can be eaten by birds and animals.

14. Arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*)

Recognized by its smooth gray bark, and remarkably straight shoots in clusters to 3 inches across, flowers bloom in April to June. Fruit is blue-black with stone grooved on one side and rounded on the other. Wood used for arrows by Indians.

15. Water Cress (*Nasturtium officinale*)

Grows in tangled masses of stems and leaves in shallow, fresh water. At the tips of the stems in late spring, open clusters of white petals are found. Fruit is a bean-like structure with seeds arranged in 2 rows. Leaves are considered a gourmet delight for salads. Water fowl and muskrats enjoy them also.

16. Sphagnum-Moss (*Sphagnum palustre*)

Plants 3-4 inches high form great mats in moist areas. Common bog builder, these plants are useful for their retention of water, and used in packing living trees. Also an excellent garden aerator.

17. Sweet Pepper Bush (*Clethra alnifolia*)

Blooms in late summer. Small heads of white flowers.



With much thanks to Mrs. Barbara Hale, who spent many hours with me, teaching the facts of field study.

Helen Iannone

Bibliography

Information derived from . . .

“Field of Natural History”

by Lawrence Palmer

Professor of Nature and Science Education

Cornell University

published by McGraw-Hill