

AULT PARK TREE TRAIL (trailhead at the service road north of pavilion) The tree species are identified by labels located 8 feet above the ground on the tree trunks. Follow the arrow below the green “T” on the direction posts located along the 2/3-mile trail.

AUSTRIAN PINE (on right, 45 yards from trailhead) This European conifer has been planted as an ornamental tree throughout the United States. Like all pines, its seeds mature in cones.

AILANTHUS (on right, 55 yards from Austrian Pine) The ailanthus, or tree-of-heaven, was brought to the United States from Asia and planted as a landscape tree and a source of food for imported silkworms. The fruit is a thin-winged seed produced in large clusters.

BOX ELDER (on right, 15 yards from Ailanthus) A tree with separate sexes. The 2-winged, 1.5-inch long, V-shaped fruits hang on the female tree over the winter. This tree is pulped to make paper.

WHITE BASSWOOD (on left, 85 yards from Box Elder) Bees make excellent honey from the midsummer flowers. The brown, pea-sized berries dangle from the center of a ribbon leaf that becomes a sail for the fruit in the autumn.

AMERICAN BEECH (on left, 45 yards from White Basswood) As this tree grows, the thin, live bark stretches instead of splitting. The tree produces 2-3 beechnuts inside a spiny, thin-shelled, half-inch fruit.

BEAR RIGHT AT THE FORK IN THE PATH

TULIP TREE (on left, 75 yards from American Beech) This “yellow poplar” has tulip-shaped leaves and flowers, and brown, upright, 2-inch cones made up of several single-winged seeds. Reaching 150 feet, this is our largest local tree species.

NORTHERN RED OAK (left, 60 yards) This oak, with light reddish-brown wood, is widely planted for timber production. Its inch-long acorn consists of a bitter nut whose base is enclosed in a very shallow cup.

YELLOW BUCKEYE (left, 20 yards) The fruit of this tree is a leathery capsule, about 2 inches in diameter, that usually encloses two shiny brown seeds that resemble the eyes of a deer. The related Ohio buckeye is Ohio’s state tree.

HACKBERRY (left, 30 yards) The bark is very rough and covered with warts. The sweet, purplish, pea-sized, late-ripening fruit of this “sugarberry” tree provides winter food for forest animals.

BLACK LOCUST (right, 20 yards) This tree, in the same family as beans and peas, produces a 2- to 4-inch-long pod that splits open to release 4 to 8 seeds. The durable wood is used for fence posts and railroad ties.

SYCAMORE (right, 60 yards, at the stream channel, there are several unlabeled specimens on the opposite side of the valley bottom from the trail) Note the peeling white and brown patches of bark, and the round, 1-inch diameter fruits that hang on the tree through the winter.

WHITE OAK (left, 30 yards) This species lends its name to a community to the west of here. Its acorn consists of an inch-long nut that is about one-quarter enclosed in a cup. Most oak lumber is made from the light-colored wood of this tree.

BLACK CHERRY (right, 50 yards) This tree's clusters of pea-sized black cherries are edible, although slightly bitter. An extract from its bark was developed by Native Americans as a cough remedy, and is still used today.

SASSAFRAS (right, 55 yards) This tree's 0.3-inch dark blue berries are eaten by birds, and the aromatic oil from all parts of the tree is used to perfume soaps and flavor medicines.

BLACK WALNUT (left, 35 yards) This commercially valuable lumber tree is named after its round, 2-inch fruit, a delicious dark nut enclosed in a thick green husk. Native Americans and pioneers made a brown dye from the husk.

CHINQUAPIN OAK (right, 45 yards) The acorn of the "chinkapin" oak, or yellow oak, has a half-inch-long nut this is almost half-enclosed in a scaly cup. The acorn is edible if roasted.

SHUMARD OAK (left, 30 yards) This oak may grow to a height of 100 feet, but it is otherwise very similar to the shorter (70 feet maximum) northern red oak.

BLACK MAPLE (right, 50 yards) This tree's leaves are usually 3-lobed, while the sugar maple's leaves are usually 5-lobed. Both trees are known for their strong, hard wood.

BUR OAK (right, 35 yards) Related to the white oak, the bur oak takes its name from the fringe around the cup covering the lower half of the inch-long acorn nut.

WHITE ASH (left, 10 yards) Ashes have separate sexes. The female tree produces a 1-winged fruit that is a little over an inch long and resembles a canoe paddle in outline. Oars, paddles and bats are made from the strong, elastic wood.

BEAR LEFT AT THE FORK IN THE PATH

BITTERNUT HICKORY (left, 70 yards) This tree's inch-long, thin-husked, thin-shelled nut contains a kernel that is so bitter that even squirrels avoid it. The wood is good for smoking hams.

SHAGBARK HICKORY (right, 90 yards) Native Americans made a sweet drink called "hickory" from this tree's round, 1-inch nuts that are enclosed in thick, 4-sectioned green husks. This tree makes the best firewood.

SUGAR MAPLE (right, 60 yards) Native Americans invented the evaporation process that reduces 40 gallons of sap to 1 gallon of syrup. They also ate the seeds of the 2-winged, inch-long, U-shaped fruits.

AMERICAN ELM (left, 25 yards) This tree's oval, half-inch fruit consists of a papery wing surrounding a flat seed. The accidentally introduced Dutch elm disease has destroyed many American elms.