

# Patapsco Valley State Park- McKeldin Area

## Medicine Tree Trail

Welcome to Patapsco Valley State Park and the Medicine Tree Trail. Trees are one of Patapsco Valley State Park's most important and bountiful natural resources. Within the park's 14,000 acres grows a very diverse population of tree species. Learn how to identify some of these species by walking the Medicine Tree Trail's .3 mile loop. This interpretive hike allows you to identify seven tree species strategically marked along the trail. Match the post numbers along the trail with the images and descriptions provided. Check your answers using the key on the back of this brochure.

**\*Foraging items from Maryland State Park Properties is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. This guide is for informational purposes only about the traditional uses of these plants. Collecting and ingesting wild plants is a potentially dangerous activity. It should only be carried-out by those with the knowledge and experience to identify species correctly. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure the safety of anything they choose to ingest. As a reminder, foraging items from Maryland State Park Properties is STRICTLY PROHIBITED\***

To identify trees, examining leaf shapes is especially helpful. Below are some terms to help you better understand the descriptions:

**Terminal Bud:** at ends of twigs, often with scales like fish

**Axial Bud:** in the notch between the leaf stem and branch

**Simple leaf:** a single leaf blade with an axial bud

**Compound Leaf:** divided into leaflets that have no axial bud

**Lobed:** irregular wavy contour of leaf shape

**Toothed:** leaf edges like a saw blade

POST \_\_\_\_\_

**Bitternut Hickory** (*Carya Cordiformis*)

**Leaves:** Alternate, compound seven to eleven leaflets

**Twigs:** slender, hairless

**Bark:** gray, tight shallow furrows

**Fruit:** round nut with sharp-pointed tip

**Flower:** Male: three yellow hanging catkins; female: small, green

**Traditional Medicinal Uses:**

The oil from the seeds has been used in the treatment of rheumatism. The bark is diuretic and laxative.



POST \_\_\_\_\_

**Tulip Poplar** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

**Leaves:** Alternate, simple, palmate, four-lobed

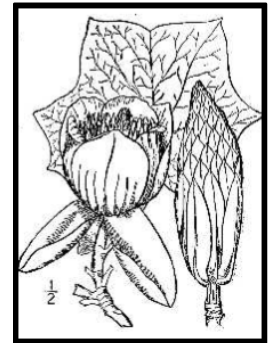
**Twigs:** Red-brown, shiny or waxy

**Bark:** gray-green with white-topped furrows

**Fruit:** Cone-like

**Flower:** Large, yellow with orange, tulip-like in shape

**Traditional Medicinal Uses:** A tea from bark and roots was used in the treatment of indigestion, dysentery, rheumatism, coughs, fevers, etc.



POST \_\_\_\_\_

**American Beech** (*Fagus grandifolia*)

**Leaves:** alternate, simple, distinctly toothed, waxy

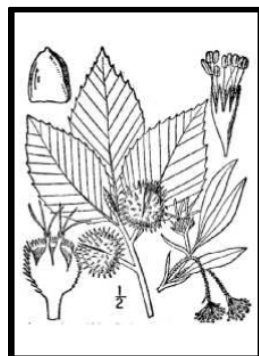
**Twigs:** light brown, zig-zagged

**Bark:** smooth, thin, gray

**Fruit:** nuts, small and triangular

**Flower:** male: small, hanging; female: grown from shorter spikes

**Traditional Medicinal Uses:** A decoction of boiled leaves has been used as a wash to treat frostbite, burns, poison ivy rash, etc.



POST \_\_\_\_\_

**Black Gum** (*Nyssa sylvatica*)

**Leaves:** Alternate, simple, oblong

**Twigs:** Stout, brown-red to gray

**Bark:** Gray-brown, irregularly furrowed

**Fruit:** Dark, purple-blue

**Flower:** Not showy, light green clusters appearing with leaves

**Traditional Medicinal Uses:** Its bark has been used in various forms to treat ailments such as; worms, assisting with food retention, and soothing eye drops.



POST \_\_\_\_\_

**American Hornbeam** (*Carpinus caroliniana*)

**Leaves:** alternate, simple, doubly serrated, waxy

**Twigs:** slender, brown to gray

**Bark:** thin, smooth, bluish gray; heavily fluted trunk

**Fruit:** small nut hanging from long, leafy stalk

**Flower:** hanging catkins



**Traditional Medicinal Uses:**

The inner bark of this tree has been used as an astringent by some Native American tribes.

POST \_\_\_\_\_

**White Oak** (*Quercus alba*)

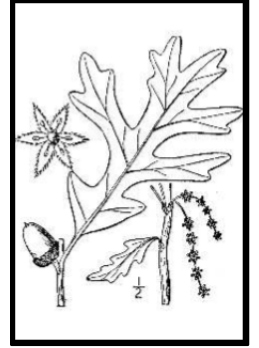
**Leaves:** Alternate, simple, seven to ten finger-like lobes

**Twig:** Hairless, red-brown, multiple round buds

**Bark:** whitish or ashy-gray, irregular, blocky

**Fruit:** Acorn

**Flower:** Male: yellow-green catkins; female: reddish, spike-like



**Traditional Medicinal Uses:** This tree was valued by Native American tribes for its antiseptic and astringent properties. It also was used to treat fevers, coughs, colds, asthma, and mouth sores.

POST \_\_\_\_\_

**Flowering Dogwood** (*Cornus florida*)

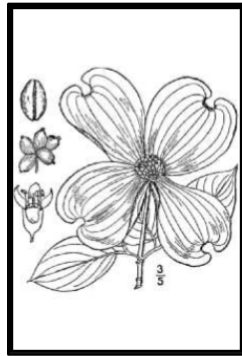
**Leaves:** opposite, simple, slightly wavy, pale below

**Twigs:** green or purple (purple on sunlit side)

**Bark:** gray, scaly, blocky

**Fruit:** shiny, oval, red, clusters of three to five

**Flower:** four showy, large white bracts



**Traditional Medicinal Uses:** Some Native American tribes used parts of this tree to treat malaria, diarrhea, ulcers, wounds, sore throats, measles, and worms.

**Answer Key:**

1 Flowering Dogwood 2 White Oak 3 American Hornbeam 4 American Beech 5 Black Gum 6 Tulip Poplar 7 Hickory