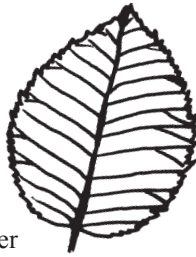


Black Birch

Betula lenta

This deciduous tree (sheds all of its leaves each fall) grows 50-60 feet tall. It can be found growing in deep, rich, moist, but well-drained soil. Ruffed grouse feed on the catkins, buds and seeds while smaller birds, like the redpoll and pine siskin, feed on the seeds. Mammals such as moose, deer, showshoe hares, porcupines and beaver eat the foliage, twigs and inner bark. The wood from this tree is used to make furniture, veneers, paper pulp and wooden ware. The sap contains aromatic oils formerly used in making birch beer soda.



Paper (White) Birch

Betula papyrifera

The white, peeling bark makes paper birch a distinctive tree. The bark was once chosen by some native Americans for the construction of canoes. Paper birch is associated with the northern hardwood forest where it will grow to 80 feet in height. Wildlife use is similar to black birch (see #1). The wood is hard, light and strong. It is used for veneer, pulpwood and fuel.



Big-toothed Aspen

Populus grandidentata

This short-lived deciduous tree grows 60-70 feet tall. It is commonly located along water courses, on sites where the forest is sparse or in disturbed areas. Wildlife such as rabbits, deer, beavers and porcupines eat the bark and twigs. Buds are commonly eaten by grouse. The wood from this tree is used for making paper products, matches, boxes and crates.



White Oak

Quercus alba

White oak is a deciduous tree that grows 80-100 feet tall. It is found in a wide variety of locations, but grows best in deep, well-drained, loamy soil. The acorns are a desired fall and winter food for a variety of wildlife species, including deer, squirrels, waterfowl, blue jays and wild turkeys. The hard wood is used for flooring, furniture, barrels, ship-building, millwork, lumber and boxes.



American Chestnut

Castanea dentata

Prior to being decimated by a blight (a fungus) introduced from Asia in 1904, this magnificent deciduous tree grew 80-100 feet tall in cool, shady, moist soils. The blight killed the top of almost all American chestnut trees by attacking the bark continuously. Today, sprouts from living root systems continue to grow and then die back a few years later. Chestnut was once an important wildlife food prior to the blight. The straight-grained, rot resistant wood may still be found in use as fence posts, railroad ties and in older homes and barns.



American Beech

Fagus grandifolia

This broad-crowned deciduous tree is uncommon at Sessions Woods. It can grow up to 70-80 feet tall under the right conditions. Beechnuts are a valuable food for a variety of birds, deer, squirrels and other small mammals. The wood is used for lumber, veneer, railroad ties, pulp, fuel, baskets, furniture, handles, flooring and millwork.



Red Oak

Quercus rubra

This large deciduous tree is common at Sessions Woods. It grows 60-80 feet tall in sandy loam soils where it often grows with other hardwoods and white pine. Wildlife, such as bear, waterfowl, woodpeckers, grouse, wild turkeys, blue jays, nuthatches, raccoons, deer, squirrels, mice and chipmunks rely on its acorns for food. The leaves and twigs are used by squirrels to make nests. The wood is used for flooring, furniture, boxes, crates, millwork, timbers, handles, pallets and boats. It is also a good shade tree.



Sassafras

Sassafras albidum

This fragrant deciduous tree grows 20-50 feet tall and is usually found in dry soils. Sassafras forms dense shrubby thickets, providing shelter for wildlife. The seeds are eaten in early fall by deer, turkeys, bear and many species of birds. The leaves, bark, twigs and roots provide oils used in soaps. Sassafras tea can be made by boiling the bark and roots.



Red Maple

Acer rubrum

This deciduous tree grows 75-90 feet tall and is commonly found in moist to swampy soil, sandy loam soils or on rocky uplands. Its buds and fruit are a food source for wildlife. New growth is commonly browsed by deer. Birds use the leaves and seed stalks to build nests. This tree is used for fuel wood and is planted as an ornamental.



Witch Hazel

Hamamelis virginiana

Witch hazel is a deciduous shrub that can grow to almost 30 feet tall. It grows well in moist soil near streams. Ruffed grouse and squirrels eat the woody seeds



which are available in fall and winter. Deer eat the twigs and foliage. Witch hazel oil, distilled from the bark of the twigs, is used to make an extract alcohol and rubbing lotion.

Sugar Maple

Acer saccharum

This deciduous tree grows 75-100 feet tall in moist, rich, well-drained soils. Wildlife use is similar to the red maple (see #9). Sugar maple is used to make maple syrup, sugar, lumber, veneer, pulpwood, flooring, furniture, boxes, crates and handles. It is also a prized shade tree.



Eastern Hemlock

Tsuga canadensis

This coniferous (evergreen) tree grows 60-70 feet tall. It grows best in cool and moist locations. This shade-tolerant tree (survives well in the shade of other trees) grows slowly, making its way through the crowns of other trees. Ruffed grouse, wild turkeys, deer and other wildlife use the foliage for winter cover. Birds like the black-throated blue warbler, black-throated green warbler and the blackburnian warbler nest in this tree. The wood, which is soft, light, brittle and difficult to work with, is used for rough construction lumber and pulpwood. Hemlock is valuable as an ornamental and a shade tree.



Yellow Birch

Betula alleghaniensis

This tree is common at Sessions Woods. It is deciduous, grows up to 100 feet tall and is found in hilly terrain with deep, rich, moist, but well-drained soil. Wildlife use is similar to the black birch (see #1). Yellow birch is used for lumber, veneer, railroad ties, furniture, woodenware, interior finish and pulpwood. The sap contains aromatic oils and is used to make distilled products.



White Ash

Fraxinus americana

White ash is a deciduous tree that grows 70-80 feet tall. It grows in deep, moist soil on well-drained slopes. Birds and mammals eat the seeds. White ash is considered a good shade tree. The wood is used to make baseball bats, oars, tool handles and furniture.



Pignut Hickory

Carya glabra

This deciduous tree grows 50-70 feet tall in well-drained soils and on rocky ridges, but grows best in rich soils. The nuts are quickly harvested by squirrels and other small mammals. This tree is good for nest building because the drooping leaves provide excellent camouflage.



The nuts are edible and the green wood is used to flavor meat in a smoker or a barbecuing pit. Due to the tough resilient grain of the wood, it is used to make tool handles and athletic equipment.

Ironwood (American Hornbeam)

Carpinus caroliniana

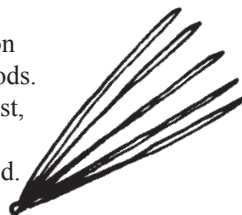
This small deciduous tree grows to heights of 20-30 feet. It grows well in rich, moist soil near swamps, streams and river margins. Birds and squirrels eat the seeds. The catkins, buds, bark and twigs are eaten by deer. The wood is tough, close-grained, heavy and strong. It is used to make tool handles, mallets and wedges. Ironwood is also used as an ornamental and a shade tree.



Eastern White Pine

Pinus strobus

White pine is the most common evergreen tree at Sessions Woods. It grows to 100 feet tall in moist, sandy loam soils. White pine seeds are used by birds for food. Porcupines and small rodents eat the bark. Young trees provide good cover year round for a variety of birds and mammals. The wood, which is light, straight-grained and easily worked, is used for lumber, cabinets, interior finish, woodenware and matches. Turpentine and pine pitch are extracted from the sap. White pine is also a common ornamental.



Mountain Laurel

Kalmia latifolia

This evergreen shrub, Connecticut's state flower, grows in dense thickets to a height of 30 feet. The leaves are toxic to humans and some domestic animals but some wildlife species are immune. Ruffed grouse and deer feed on the twigs, buds and foliage. The foliage is used by wildlife as shelter. Mountain laurel is particularly valuable in winter when deciduous trees have lost much of their cover value. This species is commonly used as an ornamental shrub.



Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area

Learn about wildlife & wildlife habitat firsthand

Sessions Woods WMA is operated by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Wildlife Division. The main focus of the facility is on conservation education -- bringing together school groups, the general public and natural resource professionals from throughout Connecticut and the region to participate in educational programs, demonstrations and workshops pertaining to wildlife and natural resource management. Facilities at Sessions Woods include an education center with an exhibit area and a large meeting room, as well as interpretive trails and habitat management demonstration areas. Sessions Woods offers conservation education programming that uses the expertise of Wildlife Division and other DEEP natural resource management staff.

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Cover illustration by Steve Jackson



This guide follows the Tree ID Trail from the northern end of the trail south.