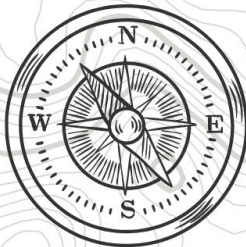


Philpott F.I.T. Trail

(Fitness Interpretive Trail)



Philpott Lake

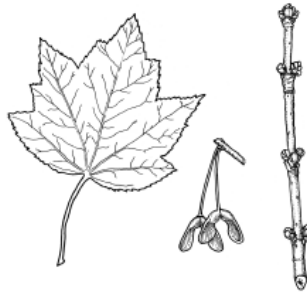




Introduction: Welcome to the Philpott Fitness Interpretive Trail (F.I.T.). Use this trail guide to learn about the features identified by the numbered trail markers along your walk. Not only can you learn a lot about nature and your environment, but you can also get in shape and stay fit on this unique trail. When you reach the end of the interpretive portion of the trail (approx. 0.4 mi. one way), you may return the way you came or cross the road and continue along the Philpott Park trail system. Continuing the trail will take you through the woods, along the lake shoreline, past the Philpott Marina, and back to the overlook parking area, for a total of approximately 1.5 miles.



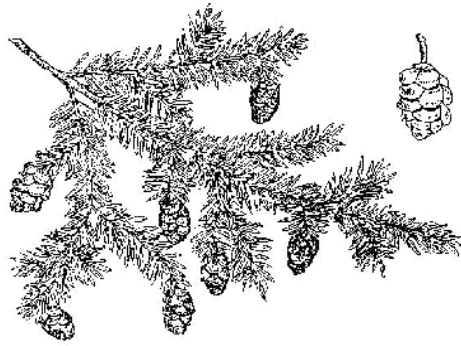
You may keep this guide or recycle it by returning the guide for others to use. We hope you will continue to learn about our natural and cultural resources. Remember: good hikers take only pictures and leave only tracks! Pack it in – pack it out!



1. Red Maple: The Red Maple offers some of the most spectacular fall colors of any tree in the Blue Ridge Mountains with its brilliant orange and scarlet leaves. Its winged shaped seeds fall to the ground like little helicopters, providing food for birds, squirrels, and other rodents. Deer also feed on young Red Maple sprouts. The wood is softer than the other maple species and is somewhat weak. However, it still has value in the furniture and paper industries. Red Maples with their large crowns and 90-foot heights make popular shade and ornamental trees. The Red Maple is the most tolerant to soil variation and conditions of any tree in North America, making it common in many regions.



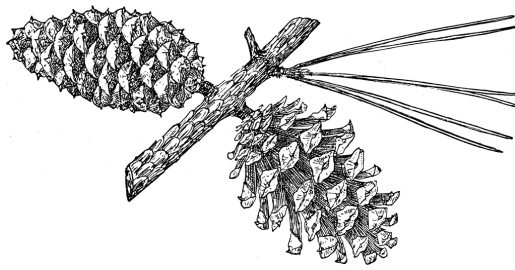
2. Mountain Laurel: Mountain Laurel is an evergreen, thicket-forming shrub and sometimes grows to the size small tree with a short, crooked trunk. It has stout, spreading branches, a compact, rounded crown, and beautiful, large, pink flower clusters. Mountain Laurel is one of the most beautiful native flowering shrubs and is displayed as an ornamental in many parks. The stamens of the flowers have spring-like mechanism which spreads pollen when tripped by a bee. The wood has been used for tool handles and turnery, and the burls, or hard knot-like growths, for briar tobacco pipes. Mountain Laurel flowers and leaves are toxic to humans and animals.



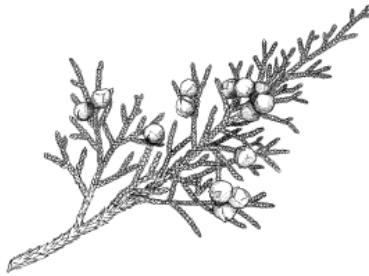
3. Eastern Hemlock: The rarely harvested Hemlock's wood is light, brittle, and very hard to work. Hemlock bark was once used as a source of tanning for the leather industry. Dense Hemlock stands are frequently used as cover by deer, grouse, and many other wildlife species. Hemlock is one of Virginia's most shade tolerant trees and can live over 800 years. Unfortunately, an invasive insect species, the woolly adelgid, is causing the death of large stands of Hemlocks throughout their range.



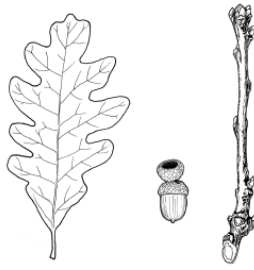
4. Flowering Dogwood: Did you know that the Flowering Dogwood is the state tree AND the state flower for Virginia? The brown to red wood is hard, heavy, strong, and very close-grained. It was once used for textile shuttles and spools and for handles and mallets but is seldom harvested today. Although the fruit is poisonous if eaten by humans, more than 35 species of birds and many large and small mammals are known to eat them. Deer and rabbits browse the foliage and twigs. Dogwoods are planted as attractive ornamental trees.



5. Shortleaf Pine: The Shortleaf Pine thrives in a variety of soil types and conditions. It ranges across most of the southeastern United States and generally grows straight and tall, up to 100 feet. It is one of the most commercially important species of yellow pine and is primarily used for lumber in construction framing. Its needles are bundled together in twos or threes, and its pinecones are egg shaped and about two inches in length. Shortleaf pine seedlings and saplings provide cover for birds like wild turkeys and quail. Its seeds provide food for many animal species on the forest floor, and its branches offer protection for animals like squirrels and racoons.

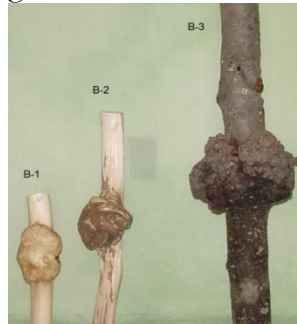


6. Eastern Redcedar: The Eastern Redcedar is found in all parts of Virginia. It is often seen growing in abandoned fields and along roadsides. The wood is fragrant, soft, and strong. The red heartwood and white sapwood produce beautiful effects when finished. Because the heartwood is resistant to decay, the Redcedar makes excellent posts, poles, cabinets, and chests. The natural oils produced in the wood repel insects. It is often used as paneling for closets and cedar shavings make excellent pet bedding material. The berry-like cones are a favorite food of many song and game birds from waxwings to quail. The thick foliage provides excellent cover for nesting and roosting birds.



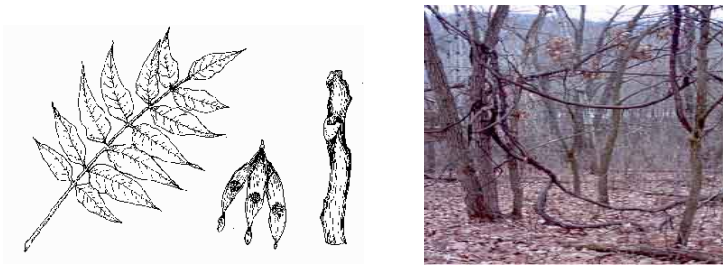
7. White Oak: The majestic white oak can reach a height of 100 feet and a diameter of 4 feet. Found all over Virginia, the white oak is a very important tree for wildlife around the Philpott Lake area. It produces acorns which are preferred by deer, bears, turkeys, and various other small animals. The wood is heavy and strong. Its close grain lumber makes it highly sought after to produce barrels, tools, furniture, and flooring for homes. A substance called tyloses plugs the vessels in the wood, making it watertight. This trait made the white oak's lumber ideal for early shipbuilding.

The injury on
the side of
this tree has
developed into
a
“Plant Burl”.



Burls are fast growing, abnormal growths on trees. A burl is usually found, like the one on this tree, in the form of a rounded outgrowth on the tree trunk. A burl results from a tree that has some form of environmental stress. Burls can be caused by injury, bacteria, or by insect infestations. Many burls grow underground on the tree roots. This type of burl usually goes undiscovered until the tree falls over. Some burls reach enormous size attaining heights of over 6 feet. The grain of the burl grows in a very deformed manner creating beautiful patterns that may be used for household items, picture frames, veneers in furniture, and automobile interior trim. However, because of the irregular grain growth, the wood is hard to work.

~Cross the road and continue on the trail~



8. Invasive Species: These nonnative species were brought to our region from other parts of the world. They have few natural deterrents, are often able to outcompete native plants, and can be difficult to eradicate. This area of the trail is overgrown with several different types of invasive species. Over 100 invasive species have been identified in Virginia.

Tree of Heaven is an invasive tree which was introduced from China. A mature Tree of Heaven produces chemicals that prevent the establishment of other plant species nearby. If a Tree of Heaven is cut, multiple trees will sprout from the root system.

Invasive Vines such as Japanese Honeysuckle and Porcelain Berry were introduced from East Asia. Invasive vines spread quickly and shade out native shrubs and young trees. Invasive Vines can cause malformed tree trunks, suppression of ground plants, and major impacts on wildlife habitats.



Autumn Olive was introduced to the United States from Japan in 1830. An Autumn Olive shrub can produce up to 80 pounds of berries in a single year. These berries contain seeds which are widely dispersed by birds. The Autumn Olive is now found all over the eastern half of the United States. As it takes over, Autumn Olive has the capability to adversely affect the nitrogen cycle upon which many mature plants depend.



9. Eastern White Pine: The Eastern White Pine's wood is light colored, of medium strength, and has straight grain. It has many industrial uses including building lumber, cabinet making, furniture, and interior finishing. White Pines are also grown in Virginia for Christmas trees. Birds and squirrels love the seeds produced in the long, narrow white pinecones. White Pines may reach heights of well over 100 feet and may grow to three feet in diameter, making it the largest conifer in eastern North America. During Colonial times, the Eastern White Pine's great height put it in great demand to produce masts for early ships.



10. Poison Ivy: Leaves of three, let it be! Hairy vine, no friend of mine! Raggy rope, don't be a dope! All are old rhymes to remind people to stay away from Poison Ivy. Poison Ivy stems, vines, leaves, and roots contain Urushiol, an oily substance which binds to the skin on contact. Urushiol causes an allergic reaction to the skin which develops into reddish inflammation, a bumpy rash, and blistering, all accompanied by annoying itching. Serious internal reactions can occur from breathing smoke from burning or if it is eaten. Urushiol can be transferred to humans from pets that contact Poison Ivy. Even dead leaves and vines may produce reactions for years!



11. Yellow Poplar: The tall straight trees in front of you are Yellow Poplars and can reach heights over 100 feet with diameters of greater than 3 feet. The shape of the yellow blooms in the Spring resembles tulips, thus giving the Yellow Poplar one of its common names, the tulip tree. The wood is soft and very easy to work and is used in a variety of products including building lumber, veneers, paper pulp, chip board, plywood, and framing for furniture products. The Yellow Poplar is a very important tree for the local lumber industry. Deer, birds, and small mammals feed off various parts of the tree. Bees make a tasty honey from the blossoms and the Yellow Poplar makes an ideal tree for shade and landscaping.



12. RUNNING CEDAR: Running Cedar grows in forests where the soil is somewhat dry and where there are a lot of dead leaves on the ground. Running Cedar spreads by its rhizomes which are stems that grow sideways under the dead leaves and send up new Running Cedar plants. Small animals such as spiders, frogs, and salamanders depend on Running Cedar to provide cover from predators. Running Cedar is closely related to ferns. Sometimes people collect Running Cedar during the holidays to make wreaths and other decorations. In some states overharvest has caused it to be a protected plant. It is against Corps of Engineers Regulations to pick and/or remove any vegetation without a Permit.



13. Sourwood: The Sourwood is found throughout southern Virginia and usually grows with a heavy lean and crooked trunk and branches. It reaches a maximum height of 40 feet and a diameter of 12 inches. The wood is heavy and hard with a compact grain. It is sometimes used for handles, but most often for firewood and pulp for paper. In the Spring, white urn shaped flowers adorn the tree. Bees use the flower's nectar to make a highly sought-after light-colored honey. Sourwood trees are sometimes planted as an ornamental, and they naturally spread over clearcut land.



14. American Beech: The American Beech can be identified by its very smooth light gray bark. It produces a fruit (beech nuts) contained in a prickly bur about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long. Each bur contains 2 nuts. The nuts are eaten by many birds and mammals including mice, squirrels, chipmunks, black bear, deer, foxes, grouse, and ducks. Many of the older trees, which can reach a height of eighty feet and a diameter of three feet, become hollow, making excellent homes for wildlife. The Beech's wood is very hard, strong, and tough. However, it is not durable when exposed to weather. The wood is used for furniture, flooring, rough lumber, tools, baskets, and charcoal. The American Beech's wood also has some medicinal uses.



15. Out – Not Up! Trees must compete for space to grow. In the woods, trees are close together. As a result, their shape is usually more compact with narrow canopies. The large trees in front of you are characteristic of trees which grew up in more open areas. Before the Corps of Engineers purchased the land to build Philpott Dam, this area was once an old farm field. The trees had room to grow very wide canopies with long branches reaching out like tentacles in all directions. In other words, they grew out, not up!

** This concludes the interpretive portion of this trail. The trail continues across the road and will take you to the parking lot near the Philpott Marina. From there the trail near the boat ramp will lead you back to the Overlook parking area. See the trail map on the back cover of this guide.*



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Philpott Lake Visitor Assistance Center
1058 Philpott Dam Road
Bassett VA 24055

Telephone: (276) 629-2703
Fax: (276) 629-3493
E-mail: philpott@usace.army.mil

