

1. Smooth Alder (*Alnus serrulata*):

growing as a large shrub or small tree, the smooth alder prefers to grow in a moist habitat near streams or rivers. Smooth Alder is characterized by having smooth, gray, “muscle-like” bark. Alders are in the birch (Betulaceae) family and produce flowers called catkins for reproduction. The flowers are pollinated by wind. Smooth Alder is monoecious, meaning that male and female flowers occur on the same tree. The female catkins are woody, looking like small “pine cones.” Smooth Alder provides food for deer, butterflies, and bees.



Female catkin

Male catkin

2. Shining Clubmoss (*Lycopodium lucidulum*):

in a group of primitive vascular plants, evolutionarily more advanced than mosses. Club mosses are usually creeping and often inhabit moist places. They are non-flowering and do not produce seeds. They reproduce by means of spores, either clustered into small cones or borne in the axils of the small scale like leaves. Belonging to the class Lycopodiopsida, the class was once a dominant plant group in the Carboniferous Period, when they attained the size of trees, contributing to the coal deposits then being formed. They are now considered relicts of these ancient plants.



3. Partridge Berry (*Mitchella repens*): a creeping evergreen, occurring in rich humus soil in shady areas. This wildflower blooms in the late spring to early summer, producing a dimorphous flower, meaning that twin, white tubular flowers are produced from one calyx (a collective term for the base of a flower). Each dimorphous flower has one pistil (female part); therefore, the pollination of the dimorphous flower results in only one red berry. If you look closely at the berry, you will see two “dimples,” one from each flower! The scarlet berries are an important food source for several species of birds, such as Ruffed Grouse and Northern Bobwhite as well as Red Fox, Raccoon, and White-tailed Deer.



4. Natural Disasters: ice storms can wreak havoc on a forest. The winter storm of 1993 brought along with it some of the worst accumulations of ice on trees in this area. The fallen trees before you are remnants of that terrible storm. Although the forest looks cluttered because of the downed trees, this is actually a natural and very important process of nature. Believe it or not, these “dead” trees are teaming with life! They provide sanctuary for the F.B.I.! No, not the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but numerous **Fungi**, **Bacteria**, and **Invertebrates**! These organisms are important to the decomposition and recycling of organic matter. Nature’s FBI are responsible for turning dead trees into rich, fertile soil for the growth of new plants and trees.



5. Heartleaf or Little Brown Jug (*Hexastylis arifolia*): an evergreen herb known for its low-lying “heart”-shaped leaves. These plants prefer to grow in a shady environment in acidic soil. This perennial herb blooms March-May. The common name “Little Brown Jug” refers to the irregular flowers. The flowers are brown to purplish and up to 1” in length. The flower petals are fused and narrow toward the top, resembling a “jug.” These unique flowers are often found blooming under the leaf litter where they are pollinated by ground dwelling insects.



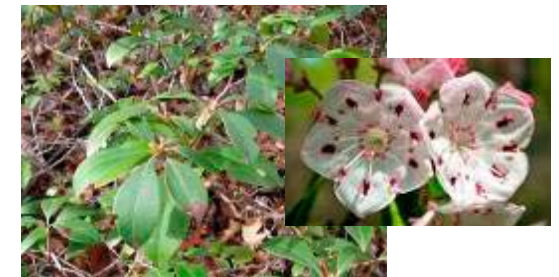
6. Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*): if you look closely at the leaves, you will see that they are made of many leaflets in pairs on either side of the central stalk. Each of these leaflets has a little “toe” pointing upward along the central stalk. These “toes” make the leaflet look something like a Christmas stocking as you can see in the picture below. This common evergreen fern grows on shaded, north or east-facing slopes, usually in acidic, humus-rich soil. This plant does not produce flowers; instead, ferns are spore producers and wind pollinated. The Christmas Fern provides food for animals such as rabbits, chipmunks, Ruffed Grouse, and Box Turtles. The long fronds also provide protective shelter for insects, reptiles, and amphibians.



7. Lichen: a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and green or blue-green algae. The fungus provides water, minerals, and structure for the algae to live. In turn, the plant provides food, made from sunlight, to the fungus. Lichen is a food source for some animals and insect larvae and is used in the nest building of the Northern Flying Squirrel and some songbirds.



8. Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*): a common evergreen shrub of the mountains and Piedmont. Blooming in early summer, the stamens, or pollen producing parts, of this flower are designed to “whap” a bee with its pollen, transporting the pollen to the next flower. Taking a close look at the flower, you will notice that the stamens are bent and tucked into little pouches, just ready to be released by the movement of an insect! The Mountain Laurel looks very similar to the Carolina Dwarf Rhododendron (*Rhododendron minus*), but can be identified by the lack of persistent brown spots on the underside of the leaves.



9. Oak-Hickory Forest: the most common tapestry of canopy trees that blanket Eastern forests. This forest type provides an abundance of food for many types of animals. As a food source, the oak-hickory forest provides a constant food supply. Wildlife prefer White Oak acorns to hickory nuts, however, oaks only produce acorns in abundance every other year. Therefore, the annual crop of hickory nuts sustains many species in lean acorn years; and they are always a favorite of small mammals. The forest canopies of oak and hickory provide habitat for a variety of birds and mammals including Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Jay, Ovenbird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Wild Turkey, and Carolina Chickadee, White-tailed Deer, squirrel, chipmunk, mice, and voles.

10. Yellow Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*): also called the “tulip tree” because the shape of the leaf resembles a tulip flower, the Yellow Poplar leaf is the symbol of the **Pacolet Area Conservancy**. The flowers are large, cup shaped, and showy with six greenish-yellow and orange petals, primarily pollinated by honeybees. The fruits are cone-shaped masses of many narrow winged samaras (seeds plus ‘wings’ to aid in dispersal). Sprouts are a staple deer browse and seeds are used by squirrels in early fall and again in mid-winter.

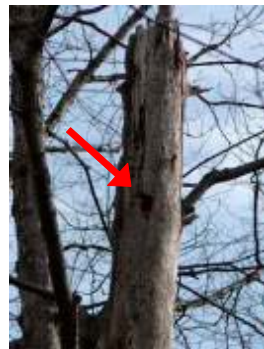


★ If you look closely at the trunks of the Tulip Poplar around you, you may notice a series of small holes that are arranged in horizontal rows up the trunk. These holes were made by a type of woodpecker called the **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)**. This woodpecker makes several small holes in the trunks of trees. As the sap flows in the trunk, these holes become “wells” that fill with sap that the sapsucker licks up as food. Insects will often come to the “wells” to fill up on the sap and the sapsucker will get a bonus burst of protein. During spring migration, hummingbirds will often “follow” the sapsuckers north, drinking the nutrient rich sap from the holes made by the sapsuckers!



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

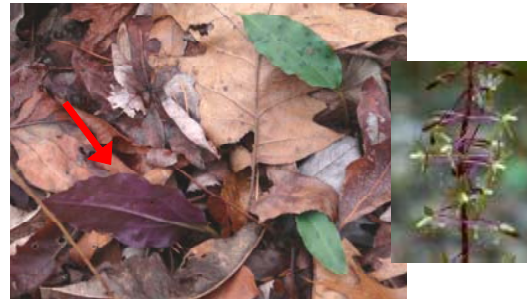
11. Dead Standing Trees: an important part of a forest ecosystem, these dead trees provide habitat for numerous insects that in turn are food for many birds and mammals. Dead trees or snags also provide important nesting sites for many birds and mammals.



12. Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*): this deciduous understory tree is best recognized in the spring, when its flowers open. The showy white “flowers” are actually bracts, modified or specialized leaves, that protect the immature flowers during the cold winter months. The flowers are small and yellow and clustered in the center of the bracts. Each flower that is pollinated produces a bright red fruit that persists into the winter and is a favorite food of many birds. This tree is easily identified any time of year by the pattern on its bark. The bark has a pattern similar to that of corn on the cob, which can be related to the dogwoods genus, *Cornus*.



13. Crane-fly Orchid (*Tipularia discolor*): named for the shape and coloration of the flower, which resembles an insect called a Crane-fly. This native orchid blooms from July-September. The flowers are a watery-translucent, purplish green. It is found in rich woods with acidic soils. A single leaf emerges in autumn and generally stays through the winter, then withers by late spring. The leaves are usually green above and beet red below. There are no leaves present when the orchid blooms.



Weaverbarton Shuford Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Self-guided Nature Trail



“saving the places you love”

Protected by:
Pacolet Area Conservancy

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PAC’s Weaverbarton Shuford Memorial
Wildlife Sanctuary and Norman Wilder Forest
are proud to be located along the
North Carolina Birding Trail