

Richard E. McDowell Community Trail - Tree Guide

1. Black Willow (*Salix nigra*)—pioneer tree in wet areas, sprouts easily, valuable in soil stabilization and erosion control. Salicin, active ingredient in aspirin, extracted from bark.

2. Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)—most-widely distributed tree in North America. Short-lived, clonal, pioneer with smooth, whitish bark. Its leaves “tremble” even in a slight breeze. Provides food for beaver, deer, and other mammals. Major source of pulpwood.

3. Box Elder / Ashleaf Maple (*Acer negundo*)—has opposite, but unmaple-like leaves that are divided into 3-5 leaflets. Young 3-leaved seedlings may be confused with poison ivy, which has alternate leaves; adult leaves may look like ash leaves.

4. Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*)—tall, introduced tree with upward-curving branches, downward-hanging branchlets, and large, cigar-shaped, downward-hanging cones. Provides wildlife with food and shelter and roosting spots for owls, hawks, and crows.

5. Green Ash / Red Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)—bottomland tree with quite variable 5-9 shortstalked leaflets, twigs, and bark. It, along with white ash, is lumbered for baseball bats and other uses.

6. Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)—largest native conifer in the northeast, has horizontal branches in whorls; 3- to 5-inch needles with 5 in a bundle; and slender, 4- to 8-inch cones. Valuable timber trees. Very few virgin stands remain in PA, but you can walk the Tuna Valley Trail Association's White Pine Trail at Marilla Reservoir.

7. Wild Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)—easily identifiable by the large blackish bark flakes on its mature trunk. Produces huge quantities of small, bitter black fruit that feed a wide variety of birds and mammals. Its pink-turning-red wood has high commercial value.

8. Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)—one of the most abundant and widespread trees in the eastern United States with opposite, usually 3-lobed leaves that turn red in fall. Provides food for wildlife. Rapidly growing landscape tree. Commercially valuable and harvested as “soft” maple.

9. Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)—has opposite, mostly 5-lobed leaves that turn golden-yellow in fall. Provides food for wildlife and sap for maple sugar and syrup. Commercially harvested as “hard maple.”

10. Gray Birch (*Betula populifolia*)—has chalkywhite, non-peeling bark with black triangular patches on the trunk at the base of a branch. Often grows with quaking aspen as a pioneer tree in disturbed areas.

11. Common Apple (*Malus pumila*)—native to Eurasia but grows throughout our region in abandoned fields, lumber mills, and wood chemical plants and wherever people discarded an apple core. Wildlife eat the fruit, buds, and branches.

12. Pin Cherry / Fire Cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*)—small, fast-growing, sun-loving shrub or small tree. Pioneer in burned areas. Has shiny, smooth, red-brown bark with white, horizontal slashes. Various birds and mammals, including humans, eat its small, red cherries.

13. Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)—tall, long-lived, fast-growing oak. Very common in this region. Leaves highly variable, even on the same tree, but the toothed lobes point toward the leaf tip at a 45-degree angle and are indented less than halfway to the midrib. Commercially valuable wood. Wildlife eat the acorns. (At Higie Family Crossing, #13a, is a mature, but dying, Northern Red Oak with a circumference of 11.5 feet.)

14. Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*)—has shiny, yellowish-gray bark, peeling in small curls, and marked with narrow horizontal lines. Often grows in cool, moist habitats on top of a fallen “nurse” log and thus, appears perched above the ground on several vertical roots when the “nurse” tree rots away. Valuable lumber tree and source of wintergreen oil. Broken twigs and crushed leaves smell of wintergreen. Wildlife browse twigs and buds.

15. Ironwood / Blue Beech / Hornbeam / American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)—small shrubby tree with smooth, bluish-gray, sinewy trunks that look like muscles. Prefers moist, rich soils; often found in bottomlands along streams. Birds eat the fruits, and rabbits and deer browse the shoots.

16. Hawthorns (*Crataegus species*)—small trees with stiff, sharp thorns on trunks and branches. Confusing group of interbreeding, highly variable, understory trees found in clearings, fencerows, and abandoned fields. Those along the trail are most likely Cockspur Hawthorn (*C. crus-galli*) with dark-green, spoonshaped leaves; Downy Hawthorn, *C. mollis* with hairy triangular leaves; Thicket Hawthorn (*C. pruinosa*) with non-hairy, somewhattriangular leaves; and Dotted Hawthorn (*C. punctata*) with deepset leaf veins, tapering leaf bases, and fruit with dark dots. Birds frequently nest in hawthorns due to their thorny, dense crowns. Various wildlife eat the fruit.

17. Big Toothed Aspen (*Populus grandidentata*)—trunk, habits, and uses similar to Quaking Aspen (#2.), but less widespread. Unlike the quaking aspen, its young leaves are whitehairy beneath and have large, curved teeth on the margin.

18. Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)—shrub or small tree, with smooth, light gray bark with longitudinal dark stripes. Striking display of white flowers on hillsides in early spring before most leaves unfold. Wildlife eat the dry reddish-purple fruit.

19. Hop-hornbeam / Ironwood / Eastern Hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*)—small, understory tree, with brown, grooved, shreddy bark, growing in drier forest areas. Wood used for fence posts and tools. Fruit cluster resembles the common hop. Birds eat seeds and deer and rabbits browse twigs.

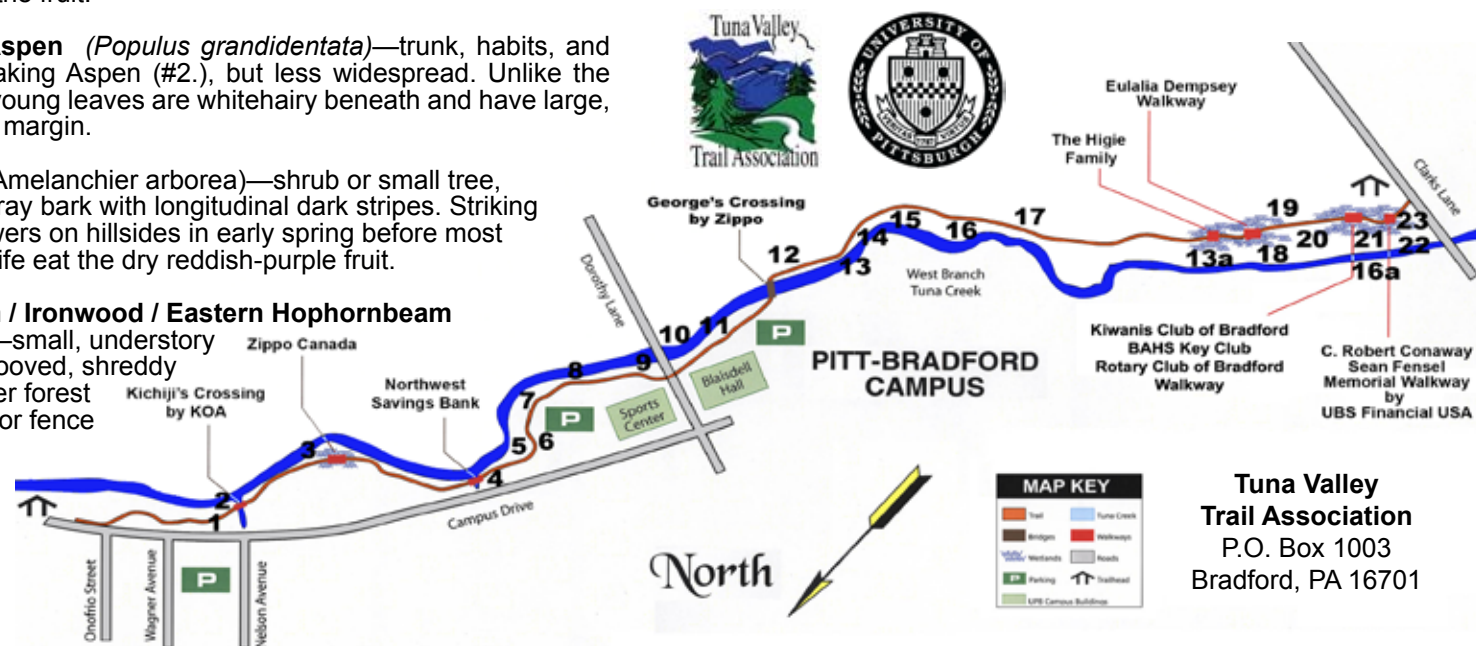
20. Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)—tall shrub or small, thicket-forming tree with few, widely-forked, stout, densely hairy twigs resembling deer antlers in velvet. The large, compound leaves have 11-31 toothed leaflets that turn a brilliant red in late summer. The hairy, flat, red fruits form large, conical clusters that stay on the tree throughout winter and are eaten, seemingly as an emergency ration, by a variety of wildlife.

21. Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)—has smooth, gray bark and papery, coarse-toothed leaves with 1 tooth per vein. Leaves turn golden and then brown in fall and stay on through winter. Easily identified by its distinctive, thin, long-pointed, many-scaled buds. Wildlife eat the nutritious beech nuts that are released from the soft-prickly fruit. Important timber species.

22. American Elm (*Ulmus americana*)—once common, large, vase-shaped tree, now decimated by Dutch Elm disease. (A fungus pathogen accidentally imported to the U.S. around 1930 and spread by a native elm bark beetle has killed most mature trees from the East through the Midwest.) Leaves abruptly-pointed at tip, lop-sided at base, and doubly saw-toothed on margins.

23. Common Witch-Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)—small, often multi-trunked tree. Leaves with wavy-toothed margins and uneven bases. Flowers distinctive with 4 thread-like, bright yellow petals; in clusters of 2-3. Appear on bare twigs and branches in fall; and may still be present in winter. Twigs used historically for “divining/witching” rods to find water and mineral deposits. Bark extracts, then and now, produce astringents for toiletries.

Tree Listing Compiled by: Erin & Lisa Moake, Pitt-Bradford Environmental Studies Majors, and Dessie Severson, PhD, Retired Allegheny Institute of Natural History & Pitt-Bradford Professor of Biology.



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