NATURE TRAIL GUIDE

WELCOME!

You are about to take a journey on our center’s unique nature trail. As you walk through the trail, stop at each numbered sign to see how many things mentioned at each stop you can find. Depending on the time of year, the appearance of flowers, fruits and foliage may vary. Stay on the path and enjoy the natural beauty. Leave the flowers, recycled art works and plants for others to enjoy.

Stop #1 - Begins at the Earth Cube Composter.

Left side of trail: This unit speeds up the decomposition process of mixing food scraps and wood shavings to produce a gorgeous humus similar to the natural process for rich soil we see on the forest floor. Right side of trail: A Willow stand is sprouting from an old fallen Willow tree. Willows have long narrow, light green leaves and often a cottony underside. Left side of trail: Dwarf Dogwood (Bunchberry) that early have tiny white leafs looking like flowers, then red berries. Bird Vetch is a purple flower, pea-like vine (invasive plant) that climbs over other plants.

Stop #2

Between fallen Birch log at left of viewing area and White Spruce tree on right: Alaskan Blue Bell, Fireweed, Devil’s Club (caution very prickly everywhere; leaves and stems), Highbush Cranberry, Common Horsetail and Pink Pyrola, a small low plant with oval leaves and pink flowers on top of a stalk.

Stop #3

Left side of the viewing area: A large Birch tree is growing out of an old stump. Birch bark is whitish to gray in color, smooth, thin, paper-like peeling. At its right: Dwarf Dogwood, Highbush Cranberry and some Devil’s Club.

Stop #4

In the clearing: Ferns, that have fiddlehead-like stems in springtime, Cow Parsnips with hairy stems, broad leaves and white flowers, Wild Strawberries, Tall Buttercup (tiny yellow flowers), and Common Horsetail (a green feathery ancient fern).

Stop #5

Back of open area: Alder shrubs having tiny seed cones and sharp, fine-toothed leaves. On the left: dome shaped Elderberry shrubs have compound leaves and red berries. On the right: Devil’s Club “mother” stock. In open area: Common Horsetail and Fireweed.

Stop #6

Birch tree grouping: At the rear is a large Birch tree with a giant burl (round growth) about six feet up the trunk. The forest floor is carpeted with Common Horsetail and a few Cow Parsnip.
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Stop #7
The area surrounding the abandoned car is full of ferns and Dandelions in the early summer. As the summer goes on, they are taken over by tall, native grasses, Cow Parsnip and Fireweed.

The abandoned car currently is used for “recycled art” and is waiting to be recycled for steel production.

Stop #8
Here is a fine example of a White Spruce tree and a Quaking Aspen grove. Aspen have heart shaped leaves and green-gray bark. Also on the ground is Imitation Queen Ann’s Lace or Poison Hemlock. The roots of Poison Hemlock are, as named, poison! It was the plant that killed Socrates!

Stop #9
Here you’ll find another example of a large Birch tree that has grown out of an old Birch stump. Around the base is Dwarf Dogwood or “Bunchberries.”

Stop #10
At trail’s edge: Dwarf Dogwood, Alaskan Bluebells and small ferns. Further back are young Cottonwood and Balsam Poplar saplings.

Stop #11
Here is a tree grouping of Willow and Black Cottonwood at the edge of the outdoor amphitheater. On the ground are: Ox Eye Daisies, Highbush Cranberries, Fireweed and Alaskan Yarrow.

Stop #12
At the base of the older Birch tree, voids occur due to root growth. The voids are sometimes used by squirrels, other small mammals, for protective cover or dens for bears. Note: here is the Willow stand growing from the old willow log extending back to the one mentioned in Stop #1.

Stop #13
On the ridge by the front door: A culturally modified Birch tree. An information panel is available in the Library. “Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” - Warren Buffet

Thank you for visiting the Outdoor Education Area!
More information inside.

When returning this guide back to the Lending Library, ask to look at the folder with more detailed information on the plants, flowers and trees that you saw on this nature trail. The Library also has several informative plant/flower books to view or check out.