



Station 24.

This **sassafras** has furrowed, grayish-brown bark. The leaves have 3 different shapes: 3 lobes (3 fingers), 2 lobes (mittens), or just 1 lobe (1 finger). Young twigs are green and have an aromatic odor. There is a bed of large beech ferns in back of this tree. Please do not walk on them.



Station 25.

This **white ash** has gray bark with rough, longitudinal furrows. The stout, opposite branches, with blunt, rounded buds, have opposite, compound leaves.

This ends the Hemmer Woods trail. We hope you have enjoyed your walk through this old-growth forest, a piece of Indiana's heritage. Please visit again.

If you do not want to keep this brochure, return it to the registration box for the next person.

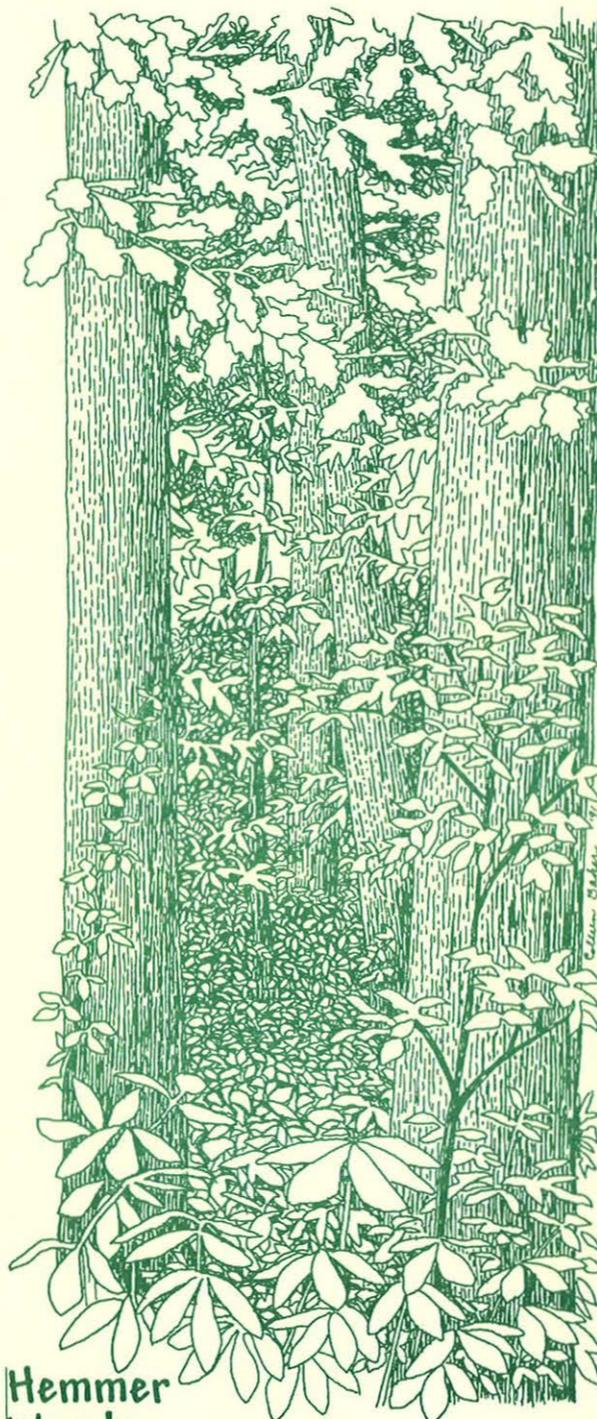
Directions

Hemmer Woods is located in Gibson County. From the intersection of St. Rd. 57 at Buckskin, Indiana, take Co. Rd. 900S about 2.5 mi. east to Co. Rd. 1050E, the 4th intersection after the railroad tracks. Then go 0.5 mi. north (left) to a marked parking lot. The preserve is on the east (right) side of the road.



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Hemmer Woods Nature Preserve

Hemmer Woods Nature Preserve

Hemmer Woods has been in the family name for over 100 years. The 72 acres were acquired by the State of Indiana in 1974.

The tract is a prime example of the original woodlands found in the southwestern part of the state. Oak-hickory forest type grows on the higher portion of the preserve and swamp hardwoods below it.

A self-guiding trail has been constructed in the upland and begins at the parking area, leading to the right.

This 0.7 mi. long trail leads you counter-clockwise, beginning and ending at the registration box. **Please sign in.**

This nature preserve was established for the purpose of preserving the area in its natural state. There are no facilities—no drinking fountains, picnic tables, no restrooms.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PRESERVE'S NATURAL VALUES, PLEASE: REMAIN ON THE TRAIL, PROTECT ALL PLANTS AND ANIMALS, KEEP THE AREA FREE OF LITTER, AND OBSERVE THE BAN ON HUNTING, FIRES, CUTTING, PICNICKING, CAMPING, HORSE AND VEHICULAR USE.

forest trail forest

leaflet of a compound leaf



Station 1.

The large tree 30 ft in front of the marker is a **red hickory**. Notice the tight, ridged bark. The nuts are rounded at the base, more pointed at the top. The alternate, compound leaf usually has 5-7 leaflets. This species varies considerably in form.



Station 3.

You will be able to use this self-guiding brochure much better if you notice the many differences in the young specimens at this station. A **flowering dogwood**, 15 ft in front of this post, has opposite, simple leaves. The branches appear to be telescoped into each other.

Fifteen feet to the left of the post is a **sassafras** with its three different kinds of simple leaves arranged alternately on green twigs (see Station 24).

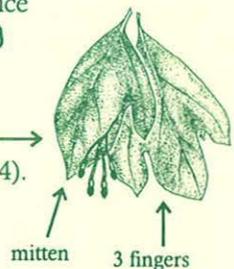
On the opposite side of the trail are several **pawpaw** (also at Station 9). It has large tear-drop-shaped leaves and pointed, velvet-brown buds. In the spring, its reddish-brown bell-shaped flowers hang below the stems.



Station 2.

Older **black cherry** trees have irregularly fissured bark with scaly plates (resembling burnt corn flakes), much like this tree. Young trees have a smooth bark that often breaks and peels. Black cherry prefers abundant light.

Several decades past, these trees began growing below an opening in the canopy. Later they were shaded by larger canopy trees. Due to another wind storm they are again exposed to ample light.



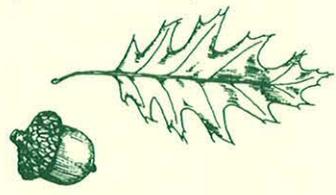
Station 4.

Water stands in this **wet depression** area most of the year. A few hickory, ash, elm, and oak grow in or along the shallow portion. This wet condition causes many of the trees to develop swollen bases.



Station 5.
This large **white oak** has gray, flaky bark divided by vertical furrows. Look on the ground for leaves having many rounded lobes. This species is one of the dominant forest trees in this preserve.

Station 7.
The **red oak** has dark gray bark with shiny ridges in the upper trunk. Red oak acorns are about 1" in length with 1/4 of its length in a shallow cup.



Station 9.
There are many small understory **pawpaw** saplings in this grove. The alternate, simple leaves are pointed on each end. Buds are velvet-brown. The fruit is often called Indiana banana.



Station 11.
Shagbark hickory differs from the red hickory (station 1) by having shaggy bark on the upper trunk, large nuts with thick husks, and larger compound leaves with 5 leaflets. The nuts are relished by fox squirrels in this woods.



Station 12.
Contrast the white oak directly in front with the black oak directly behind. **White oak** has light flaky bark, and leaves with rounded lobes. **Black oaks** have scaly dark bark and deeply cut, pointed leaves ending in bristles.

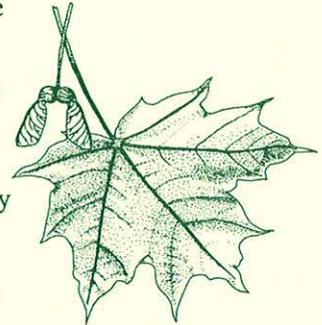


Station 6.
The **black oak log** on the ground is in the process of decay. This is hastened by the actions of fungi, bacteria and insects. A living tree utilizes many nutrients from the surrounding soil. The process of decay results in the **recycling** of these nutrients back into the soil. As quickly as these recycled nutrients enter the soil, the surrounding vegetation is making use of them.



Station 8.
Black oak has dark brown, furrowed bark. Look on the ground for leaves with 3 upper large, deeply cut lobes and 2 smaller lower lobes. Each lobe ends in a tapering soft spine. The acorn cup covers about 1/2 of the acorn.

Station 10.
The **sugar maple** is scarce in this woods because of the predominance of oak and hickory. It has opposite, simple leaves with 3 prominent upper lobes and 2 smaller lobes below them. The bark is light gray with shallow furrows. The buds are sharply pointed. Sugar maple produces an abundance of seed, though most do not survive to become canopy trees.

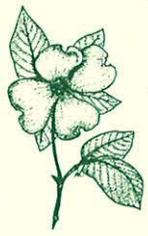


Station 13.
This **diseased white oak** has smooth bark beginning 3 ft above the ground. "Smooth patch" or "white patch" is caused by a fungus. It does not kill the tree, but often causes constrictions of the trunk.

Station 14.
This **mockernut hickory** has tight dark bark, and stout twigs and branches. There are 9 leaflets in the compound leaves. Buds are large, round and pointed. Compare this with the shagbark hickory, 15 ft behind to your right on the opposite side of the trail. It has 5 leaflets, light gray shaggy bark, and finer twigs and branches. The large thick-hulled nuts are similar on both trees.

Station 16.
This group of **grapevines** is climbing the trees at this location; sometimes they will grow into the canopy of larger trees. Grapevines can provide wildlife with food and nesting sites.

Station 18.
This small tree in front of the post, a **flowering dogwood**, is found in the understory and never competes with the taller canopy trees. The reddish-brown bark is broken into small square plates. Its beautiful white flowers are a sure sign of spring. Squirrels and robins feed on the red fruit in the fall and winter.



Station 20.
The Division of Forestry made this woods a Classified Forest in 1931. As trees matured, they were **selectively cut**. Once the woods was acquired as a nature preserve, tree cutting was permanently ended. The preservation of a few old-growth stands is desirable, as most timber owners prefer to harvest their trees. Preservation retains this oak-hickory forest for its beauty, education, and scientific uses.

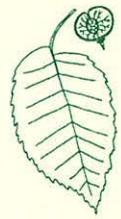
Station 22.
Clumps of **blackberries** are found in wood openings where sufficient sunlight can reach the forest floor. Note the stout spine and 5 leaflets that radiate around the stem attachment. Woodchucks and other animals often dig ground dens at these locations.



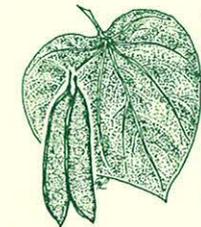
Station 15.
The vines with 3 leaflets, on the trunk of the white oak, and on the ground, are **poison ivy**. The vines with 5 leaflets around the area and on the trunk are **Virginia creeper** (or woodbine) and are not poisonous.



Station 17.
Red elm (or slippery elm) has rough, alternate, simple leaves with saw-toothed margins. Red elm is more resistant to diseases than American elm, but some of them are also dying.



Station 19.
These **redbuds** are also small understory trees, and belong to the legume family. The alternate, simple leaves are heart-shaped. The cluster of beautiful red flowers produce small bean pods.



Station 21.
This **red maple** is a "soft maple" that prefers to grow on moist sites in the upland. The opposite, simple leaves have 3 prominent saw-toothed upper lobes and a reddish leaf stem. The fruit is a winged samara. The smooth, gray bark becomes scaly on older trees.



Station 23.
The large white oak here fell in 1987. The crown of the oak occupied a large area of the forest canopy. Now much more light is able to penetrate to the forest floor, creating a **light gap**. Notice all the small trees and seedlings that have begun to compete for the available light and space. Over the next century the competitors will be reduced to 1 or 2 trees.

