

Profile of the Oak-Hickory Forest

The forest has a structure much like that of an apartment house, with a basement, ground floor, and upper stories. Each level has its own resident plants and animals, though many of the former grow through more than one story and many of the latter move up and down through the layers. The gray squirrel, for instance, feeds at all levels from the ground to the upper branches—but does not go underground like the chipmunk. Many of the woody plants of the understory are young individuals of canopy trees.

Canopy (overstory)

1. White oak
2. Bitternut hickory
3. Great horned owl
4. Flying squirrel

11. Spicebush
12. Arrowwood
13. Whitetail deer
14. Virginia creeper
15. Spicebush

Forest Floor

23. Mushrooms
24. Box turtle
25. Chipmunk

Understory

5. Gray birch
6. Young oak
7. Dogwood
8. Young hickory
9. Red-eyed vireo

Herb Layer

16. Cottontail
17. Wood anemone
18. Solomon's-seal
19. White baneberry
20. Christmas fern
21. Wild turkey
22. May apple

Shrub Layer

10. Ovenbird (nests and feeds on forest floor)

Soil Layer

26. Mycelium of mushrooms
27. Insect larvae
28. Shorttail shrew (feeds on forest floor)
29. Plant roots

