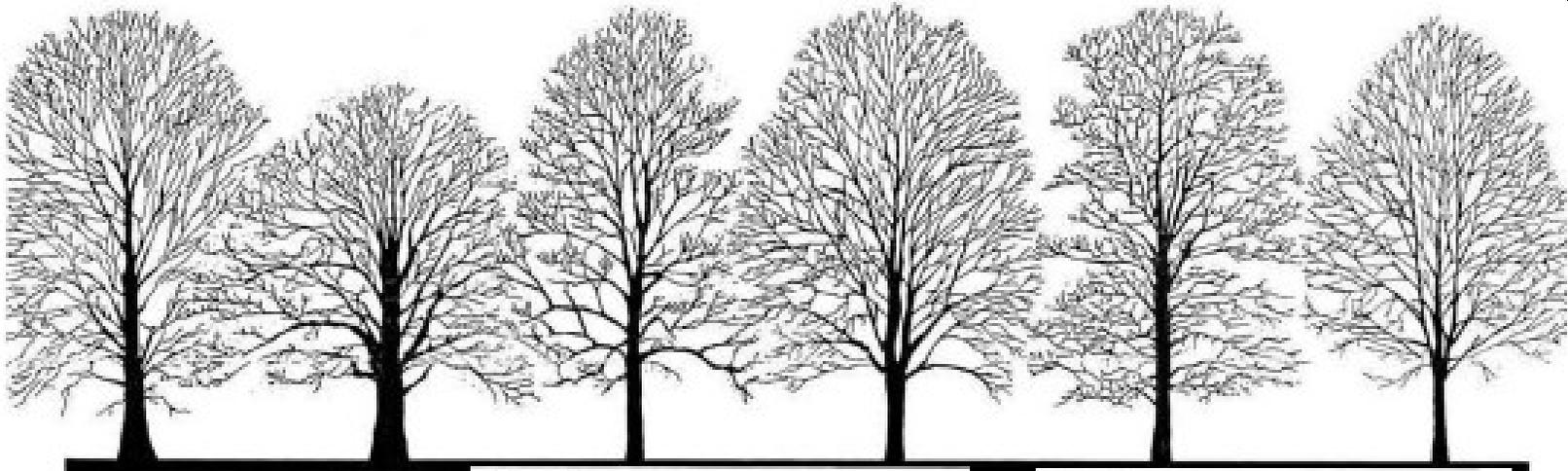


# Hog Rock Nature Trail

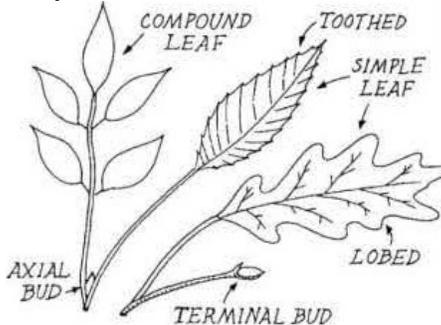
Catoctin Mountain Park Maryland



## HOG ROCK NATURE TRAIL IS

a path of discovery in the forest ... about 1 1/2 miles long, in a loop ... easy walking, but not accessible by wheelchairs.

The trail begins 1.3 miles up the road from the visitor center, across from Hog Rock parking area. Follow the numbered posts and use this guide to find out how to identify the trees marked with arrowheads. Remember, the park is a sanctuary for all living things. Do not disturb plants, animals, or any other natural feature. When Catoctin Furnace closed down and farms failed in the 1930s, the federal government purchased and set aside 10,000 acres on Catoctin Mountain as a recreation area. Since then the National Park Service has allowed trees to grow up in natural succession. Sixty years later, this eastern hardwood forest will soon be reaching its climax stage. Along the trail the first six trees for you to look for are among the most common ones in the park. To identify trees, leaf shapes help but the pattern of bark and leaf buds also are clues, especially in winter. First, a few terms to help you understand the descriptions:



**TERMINAL BUD:** at ends of twigs, often with scales like fish

**AXIAL BUD:** in the notch between the leaf stem and branch

**SIMPLE LEAF:** a single leaf blade with an axial bud

**COMPOUND LEAF:** divided into leaflets that have no axial bud

**LOBED:** irregular wavy contour of leaf shape

**TOOTHED:** leaf edges like a saw blade

Standing still but not still, the tree is a model manufacturing unit. Roots draw moisture and minerals from the earth which sapwood transports to the leaves. Sunlight is the power plant that causes leaves to work their chemistry. Resulting food that nourishes the tree is carried down in a thin layer of tissue just beneath the bark, which in turn wraps the tree in a thick protective coat. A tree grows in concentric circles, the older wood in the center no longer active, the new wood close beneath the bark.

### POST 1 Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)



**LEAVES:** dark green, lobed, notches between lobes "U"-shaped, undersides light; brilliant fall color

**BLOOMS:** yellow April-June; winged fruit

**BARK:** smooth, light gray on young trees, growing rough and darker

**TWIGS:** glossy, reddish brown; buds, slender, sharp

Tree sap, tapped in late winter for syrup and flavorings, is very choice. One tree's yield, some 20 gallons of sap, boils down to only two quarts of syrup.

### POST 2 Basswood (*Tilia americana*)



**LEAVES:** heart-shaped with fine toothed edges

**BLOOMS:** tiny yellow, fragrant, in midsummer

**NUTS:** pea-sized, inedible, dangling from wing-like leaves of bracts

**BARK:** smooth gray, maturing to darker in shallow grooves

**TWIGS:** glossy, reddish brown; buds, slender, sharp

The inner bark can be woven into ropes and mats. Bees seek out flowers to make honey.

### POST 3 Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)



**LEAVES:** oval, smooth, aromatic

**FLOWERS:** yellow, early before leaves

**FRUITS:** red, July-September

Shrub of the forest's understory, once considered a sign of land good for farming. Twigs and leaves used to make a tea; berries dried and powdered for spice

### POST 4 Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*)



**LEAVES:** compound with 5-7 leaflets, underside smooth

**BARK:** light, hanging in long, loose strips

**TWIGS:** smooth, red brown, with long terminal buds

**NUTS:** green husks opening at frost to show a pale shell, a favorite for squirrels and chipmunks. This wood makes strong tool handles.

### POST 5 Musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)



**LEAVES:** dark green, oval, densely spaced

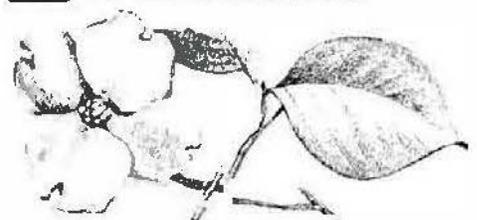
**BARK:** light, hanging in long, loose strips

**TWIGS:** smooth gray, twisted and rippling

**NUTS:** contained in papery clusters

Also known as the American hornbeam. A small tree but its hard, strong wood made yokes for oxen to pull prairie wagons.

### POST 6 Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)



**LEAVES:** simple, oval with 5-6 veins red in fall

**FLOWERS:** yellow-green centers surrounded by white modified leaves like petals, usually in fours

**FRUITS:** red in fall

**BARK:** checkered

**TWIGS:** like red smooth gray, twisted and rippling

A small tree of distinctive symmetry, with flower buds like buttons. No prime example remains along this trail because a fungus has attacked trees in this region, causing them to die from the lowest branches upward. The healthy dogwoods behind the Visitor Center show why this tree is highly prized.

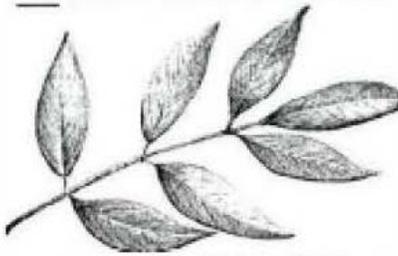
# Hog Rock

Now you have arrived at a splendid vista that opens southward over the Monocacy Valley, especially spectacular in fall color. Elevation: 1,620 feet. The rock is an outcrop of Catoctin greenstone originating more than 600 million years ago as lava flow. Erosion exposed the rock and continues to break it down into small particles to form soil. Local farmers used to bring their hogs to the base of this rock to feed on the nuts of oak and chestnut trees-hence the name.

Another trail diverges here down the mountain to Cunningham Falls. It is approximately one mile long, steep, and strenuous. Back on Hog Rock Trail, see if you can identify the next four trees. These may be difficult, but don't give up. Test yourself by writing next to the tree descriptions your guesses to the post numbers. Then check your answers below.

POST

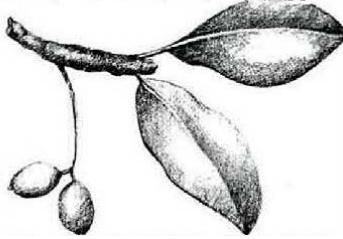
## White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*)



**LEAVES:** compound with 5-9 oval leaflets  
**BARK:** gray with many narrow ridges, growing rough and darker  
**BUDS:** blunt and scaly, sharp  
 The wood is strong but pliant and has been the favorite for sporting goods: baseball bats, tennis racquets, hockey sticks polo mallets, and playground equipment. Also popular for musical instruments and furniture.

POST

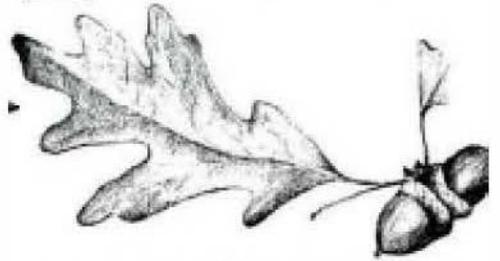
## Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)



**LEAVES:** shiny, oval, up to 5 inches long, brilliant in fall  
**FLOWERS:** tiny greenish, early summer  
**FRUIT:** blue-black clusters  
 Tree found in swampy areas. Trunk often decays and becomes hollow, providing homes for small mammals or woodpeckers.

POST

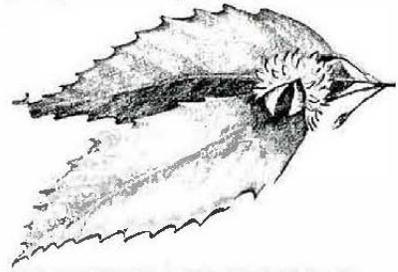
## White Oak (*Quercus alba*)



**LEAVES:** simple with shallow lobes and rounded tips, whitish undersides  
**TERMINAL BUDS:** small, blunt, red-brown  
**BARK:** gray, broken, maturing into flat ridges  
**ACORNS:** long, shiny brown, sought by deer and game birds  
 Oaks supply much lumber because the wood is hard, strong, and durable. Leaves often look tattered from gypsy moth caterpillars.

POST

## Beech (*Fagus grandiflora*) 8

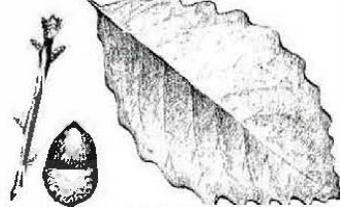


**LEAVES:** simple, oval, toothed, up to 5 inches long  
**BARK:** smooth, silver-gray  
**TERMINAL BUDS:** slender and scaly  
**NUTS:** triangular inside burs, tasty to wildlife  
 Handsome, stately tree often planted as an ornamental.

This brings you to a turn-off of the service roadway. How did you do in identifying the four trees? Keep to the right along the trail and learn about four more tree types as you fill in their post numbers.

POST

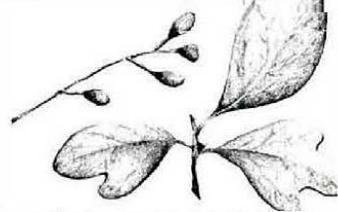
## Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinus*)



**LEAVES:** large, 6-9 inches, wavy-edged, sometimes hairy underneath  
**BARK:** deeply ridged  
**TERMINAL BUDS:** about 1/4-inch long, narrow and sharp  
 Trees produce a lot of wood with heavy tannin which served the mountains' settlers for charcoal and tanning hides. Acorns sprout readily for new growth around old trees.

POST

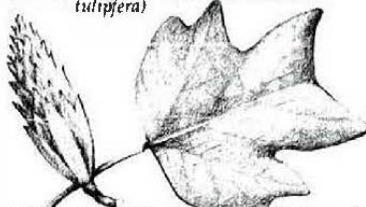
## Sassafras (*S. albidum*) 8



**LEAVES:** three types appear on same tree: simple, two-lobed, and three-fingered  
**FLOWERS:** greenish-yellow, April-June  
**FRUITS:** blue fleshy berries in fall  
**BARK:** red-brown with vertical furrows  
 Aromatic wood used for barrels and buckets, posts, small boats, and as firewood. Berries and twigs nutritious for deer and birds. Outer bark of the roots used for tea.

POST

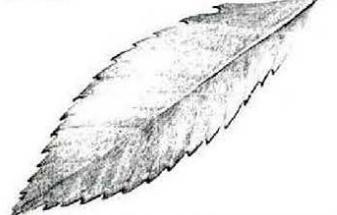
## Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



**LEAVES:** simple, distinctive shape, 6-10 inches and bright green  
**FLOWERS:** May-June, waxy-orange and green, upright on twigs  
**FRUITS:** September-November, small, whitish  
**BARK:** light gray  
 A very large tree, usually straight. The wood is straight-grained, soft, often used for furniture, toys, paper. Actually related to magnolias rather than nonlars.

POST

## Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*)



**LEAVES:** long and narrow toothed  
 This fragile example was once a dominant tree in the area but a fungal disease early this century destroyed the chestnut population nationwide. Old roots send up new shoots as here, but so far not one chestnut has grown to maturity in this forest. Probably we will not see its flowers or nuts held in prickly burs.

You have now found a real treasure of Catoctin Mountain—its trees. There are lots more to discover and there are useful books at the Visitor Center to help. The trees of Catoctin Mountain offer an ever-changing landscape: light and lacy in spring; cooling canopies in summer; vivid gold and reds in autumn; dark tracery of branches in winter snow.

The road to Hog Rock Trail closes in the winter for cross-country skiing, but visitors are welcome all season. Please come again.

### KEY

14	Tulip Poplar	10	White Oak
13	Sassafras	8	Tupelo
12	Chestnut Oak	6	White Ash
11	Chestnut	7	Beech