

Protecting the Glades

Kentucky's glades are at risk. Less than one percent of these areas of shallow soils, exposed bedrock, grasses, and wildflowers are still intact. It is a very rare ecosystem.

This habitat is one of Mantle Rock Preserve's treasures. There are only a few places in the state that host a Shawnee Hills Sandstone Glade, the type of glade in front of you and on top of Mantle Rock. Because of the shallow soil, these areas are very fragile. Please stay on the trail.



Lichens

Lichens are formed by a symbiotic association of a fungus and a photosynthetic partner, typically an algae. They tend to thrive in extreme environments, such as the high heat and low moisture conditions found atop a glade.



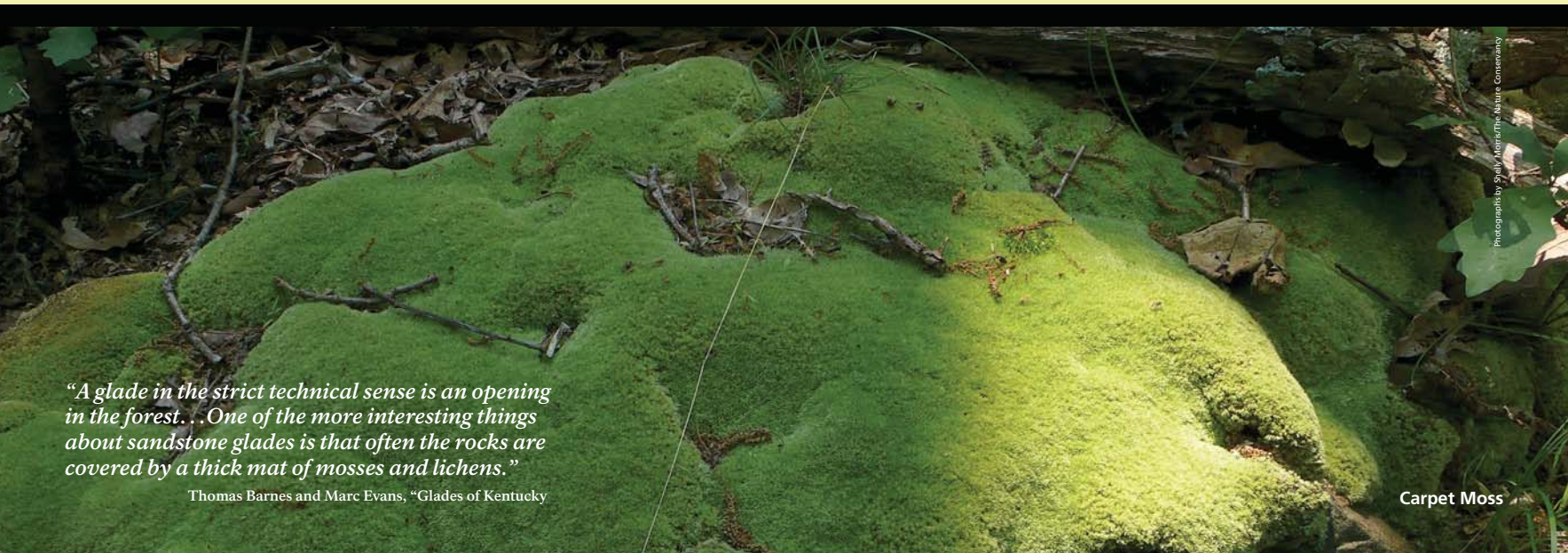
Bluets

Despite the harsh conditions found on top of a glade, in the spring delicate wildflowers such as bluets are abundant.



Prickly Pear Cactus

This iconic glade species shows off yellow flowers during the warmer months, has barbed spines, and bears edible fruit.



“A glade in the strict technical sense is an opening in the forest. . . One of the more interesting things about sandstone glades is that often the rocks are covered by a thick mat of mosses and lichens.”

Thomas Barnes and Marc Evans, “Glades of Kentucky

Photographs by Shelby Walters/The Nature Conservancy

Carpet Moss