

Trees of Rockland Preserve

Gray Birch

A small, short-lived birch adapted to drier soils than are the other birches. Bark is a dull grayish, non-peeling. Usually with a number of slender trunks, that are easily bent in snow or ice storms.



Sassafras

The leaves of the Sassafras are 4 to 6 inches long and 2 to 4 inches wide. Elliptical or 2 to 3-lobed leaves may occur on the same tree, turning yellow to red in the fall. Small, yellow-green flowers in loose bunches appear with leaves in the spring. Sassafras tea, a "spring tonic" made commonly years ago, was made by boiling the roots or bark. The Sassafras commonly grows 20 feet tall and 3 feet in diameter. It often forms dense, shrubby thickets.



Tulip Poplar or Tulip Tree

This is one of the tallest shade trees in North America (and one of the most ancient, recorded in geological ages in Europe and Asia). Its leaves are glossy, symmetrical and saddle-shaped; its long leafstalks rustle musically through the crown when the wind blows, its tulip-like, greenish yellow and orange blossoms stand upright on their branches and, translucent, hold the sun glowing in them like parts of a chandelier. Its conical fruit ripens late in September and October and stays on the tree through winter, offering birds that linger hundreds of feeding cups stocked with winged seeds. Its bark is gray-brown; ridged, "checkered". Pioneers like Daniel Boone hewed canoes from the long, straight trunks.



Low Blueberry Bush

Wild blueberries are often gathered from these low-growing, velvet-leaved bushes, then sold to supermarkets or canned. Blueberries from bushes such as these offer considerable food to wildlife. They have also been used in herbal medicine.

Mockernut Hickory

The Mockernut Hickory has fragrant leaves which are 8 to 12 inches long, with a hairy stalk and 7 to 9 narrow "leaflets" which are hairy underneath. The nut is thick-shelled, reddish-brown and has 4-ribbed sides. It grows 80 feet tall and 2 feet in diameter.

Sweet Pepperbush

A flowering plant native to eastern North America. Its oblong leaves turn yellow-gold in the fall. The flowers are white to very pale pink and have a sweet, pungent fragrance.

Spice Bush

A shrub which typically grows 6 to 12 feet high. It has clusters of tiny, aromatic, greenish-yellow flowers which bloom along the branches in early spring. Thick oblong leaves (5 inches long) turn yellow in the fall.

Directions to Rockland:

Go North from Madison center on Rt. 79 (Durham Rd.) for 6.2 miles to the traffic circle. Continue through the traffic circle, following Rt. 79 North for another 3.8 miles. Turn left (west) on Dorset Ln. Follow Dorset for .7 mile. Turn right on Devonshire Ln. Follow Devonshire for .6 mile. Turn right on Renee's Way. The parking area is at the end of Renee's Way.

Rockland Preserve

Madison Beach & Recreation

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American Chestnut

Once one of the most valuable of the American hardwoods, the American Chestnut has been virtually destroyed by chestnut blight, a fungus disease affecting the bark. The American Chestnut has oblong leaves which are 5 to 8 inches long and 2 inches wide. They are dull dark green on top, paler below and smooth on both sides. They grow nearly 100 feet tall and 4 feet in diameter.

Chestnut Oak

Native to the eastern U.S., the Chestnut Oak is a slow-growing oak that can live 400 years. The leaves of this tree have 7–16 pairs of rounded teeth (sometimes sharp). The foliage is somewhat leathery, glossy above and slightly hairy beneath. Its trunk bark is dark and deeply ridged, quite distinctive. Flowers in April or May, and the large sweet acorns mature in the fall of the same year. The trees produce large crops of acorns every 4 to 7 years. A wide variety of animals feed on the acorns.

Northern Red Oak

The Northern Red Oak is an attractive tree of the eastern U.S. It is commonly found growing on northern and eastern slopes. The leaves are pointed and are green; turning red in autumn. It flowers in early spring as the new leaves begin to unfold. Acorns mature in the second year. Squirrels and other animals do not care for these acorns because of their bitter taste and so, ironically, there are always multitudes left over to germinate and sprout more saplings and more bitter tasting acorns. Bark: grayish brown to dark gray; ridged and furrowed.



Scarlet Oak

A native, large tree, the Scarlet Oak occurs on upland sites, such as ridges and middle and upper slopes. It is a rapid-growing tree, but does not live as long as the slower growing oaks. It usually flowers in April or May, and the acorns do not develop and mature until the end of the second growing season. It is an open, rounded tree. Its leaves turn a bright red or scarlet in Autumn.

White Oak

The White Oak, one of the most important hardwood trees, is widespread across eastern North America from southern Canada to northern Florida. It is often found with many other forest trees, usually including other oaks and hickories. It flowers in spring. Its acorns are important to many species of wildlife. The light-brown wood is hard, tough, strong, and close-grained. The White Oak is used in buildings, furniture, flooring. It was the mainstay in North American ships prior to the use of steel. The Charter Oak was a White Oak.

Witch Hazel

Witch hazel blooms in the fall and has yellow ribbon-like flowers with 1 inch petals. The leaves are 6 inches long and they turn yellow in the fall. It flowers in fall. When flowers fade, fruit develops for the next year. The fruit, 1/2 inch long, explodes, launching two black seeds up to 30 feet. Witch hazel grows underneath oaks, hickories, Red Maple, Yellow Poplar, and American Beech. It is aromatic.



Black Oak

Black Oak is a common tree in the eastern U.S. It occurs on slopes and upland sites. They are fairly fast-growing but seldom live more than 200 years. Its acorns are an important source of food for wildlife. Similar to Northern Red Oak, but with leaves thicker and glossy. Its trunk is dark. Tannins in the bark were used to tan leather. It has an orange inner bark which is often relied upon as an identification mark.

Red Maple

One of the most common tree species in eastern North America. It grows rapidly for 20 to 30 years and may live 75 to 100 years. The flowers appear in early spring, long before the leaves. In the North, they open in April or May. The fruits mature 4 to 6 weeks later. The leaves of the Red Maple are 2–6 inches wide. It has a light gray bark. It is also known as the swamp maple, scarlet maple and soft maple.

Black Birch

A tall, straight, brown-or black-barked tree. Young trunk bark is tight, marked by thin horizontal stripes. Older bark is often cracked. Leaves are short-pointed. Broken twigs have delightful spicy wintergreen odor. Flowers: April-May. Fermented sap may be an ingredient of birch beer.

American Beech

The American Beech is a common forest tree of lower elevations throughout most of eastern North America. This is a slow-growing tree. It grows well in shade. It flowers in late April or early May. It retains its leaves throughout the winter on the lower-most branches. Its large oily seeds are important to many species of wildlife.



Blackgum/Black Tupelo

The hard, glossy leaves of the Black Tupelo a tropical look, at least until autumn, when they turn either partly or wholly deep red. They change color three weeks earlier than others; easier for birds to see and stop to eat on their migration. The key to the tree's identify is the dark blue fruit. The tree's bark is a dark reddish black; thick, rough, deeply and narrowly furrowed. The flowers are small and greenish.

High Bush Blueberry

This shrub is a useful wildlife plant. Domesticated selections of the highbush blueberry are the source of the cultivated blueberries in supermarkets.

Mountain Laurel

A beautiful and hardy native evergreen shrub. It blooms from April to late June. Dense thickets of Mountain Laurel offer good nesting sites for wild turkey. While poisonous to livestock and people, the leaves of the mountain laurel can be eaten by deer without a problem. It is the Connecticut state flower and protected by state law.

Yellow Birch

A tall tree, often growing with Sweet Birch and Hemlock. The bark is tannish, getting more yellowish as it gets older. Broken twigs give off wintergreen odor like that of Sweet Birch. Leaves are short-pointed. Flowers in spring.

