

**Field Guide  
To the Flora  
Of the Town of  
Chesapeake Beach, Maryland**



## Introduction

This guidebook is intended to introduce our citizens and visitors to the rich diversity of plants found in Chesapeake Beach. It is a quick look at the beautiful abundance of trees, shrubs, flowers, vines, and grasses you will encounter while walking, biking, or boating.

Some of our plants are “threatened” and some can be seen only if you are kayaking or canoeing but most of them provide food and/or habitat for the birds or animals that live amongst us. Please be respectful, enjoy, and by all means stay out of the poison ivy!



Poison ivy *Toxicodendron radicans* (L.)

Edited and Photographed by

*Nancy Feuerle*

For the Town of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland



With special recognition to

John Bacon

for making all this come together!

© copyright Nancy Feuerle 2014

## Section 1

### Trailhead

Using this Field Guide for a self-guided tour we will start at the Fishing Creek Railway Trail.



*Phragmites* (*Phragmites australis*)

Lovely to see swaying in the breeze but considered “invasive”

## Red Mulberry *Morus rubra*



Common in fertile moist soils.  
Can grow to 50-60 feet.  
Leaves yellow in autumn.  
Edible fruit; important food source for wildlife.

## Norway Spruce *Picea abies*



Also known as Finnish Spruce or Spruce Fir.

Usually 50-80 feet tall.

Used extensively to make paper pulp.

## Winged Burning Bush

*Euonymus alata*



Native of northeastern Asia  
Introduced in 1860 as an ornamental. Considered invasive.  
Birds help disperse seeds.  
Can grow to 20 feet.  
Burning bush gets its name from the lovely red color it becomes in the fall.

## Eastern Baccharis

*Baccharis halimifolia*



Also known as Hightide bush, Sea myrtle, Groundselbush.

Shrub or small tree very tolerant of salty marshes and some flooding.

Tiny white flowers mature into small seeds in autumn.

Provides food and cover for wildlife.

## Section 2

### Fishing Creek Wetlands



*In order to view this area up close you will need a canoe, kayak or small skiff. It would be very unwise to be on foot in the marsh.*



Wild rice (*Zizania Aquatica*)



Saltmarsh fleabane (*Pluchea purpurescens*)



Coastal plain aster (*Symphotrichum racemosum*)



Saltmarsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*)



*American three square (Schoenoplectus (=Scirpus) pungens)*



*Winter leftovers*



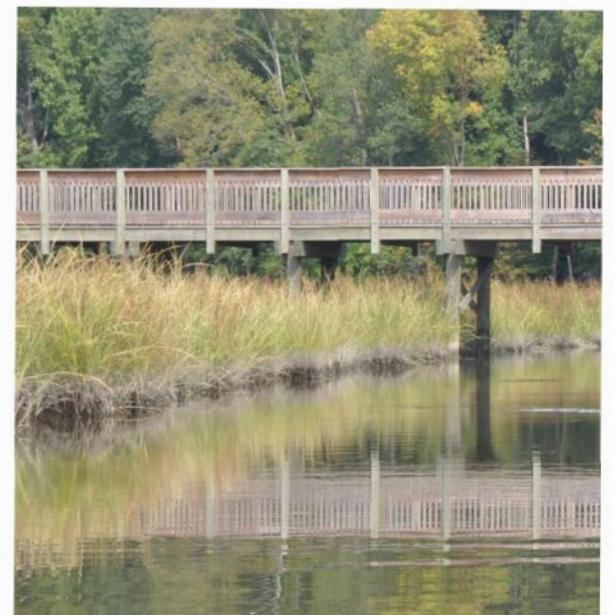
*Early spring*



*Tidemarth waterhemp (Amaranthus cannabinus)*



*Summertime Hibiscus*



*Early autumn*

## Section 3

### North side of Fishing Creek

If we follow the Railway Trail boardwalk to the north side of Fishing Creek we come first to the Bayview Hills neighborhood.



*Silky dogwoods*

### Boxelder *Acer negundo*



Also known as Ashleaf maple.  
Medium size tree about 60 feet tall. Occurs across all of North America.  
Food for birds and has been used to make maple syrup.

### Paw-paw *Asimina triloba*



Also known as Custard Apple or False Banana.  
Usually no more than 25 feet tall and may be shrub-like.  
Very large leaves.  
Edible fruit favored by wild-life.  
Important host for development of Zebra Swallowtail Butterflies.

## Southern Bayberry

*Morella caroliniensis*



Also known as Waxmyrtle.  
May grow to 30 feet.  
Prefers moist soils, brackish swamps.  
Very aromatic when crushed.  
Can be used in candlemaking.  
Produces a waxy berry which only a few birds can digest.

## Black Cherry

*Prunus serotina*



Medium to large tree often 60 feet tall.  
Very hard wood prized for furniture making.  
Small fruit ripens in late summer and is often used in jams and pies. Eagerly eaten by birds.

## Hackberry

*Celtis occidentalis*



Also known as Sugarberry or Nettle tree.  
May grow to 90 feet.  
Small blooms in early spring and small fruit in autumn consumed by many birds.

## Sweetgum

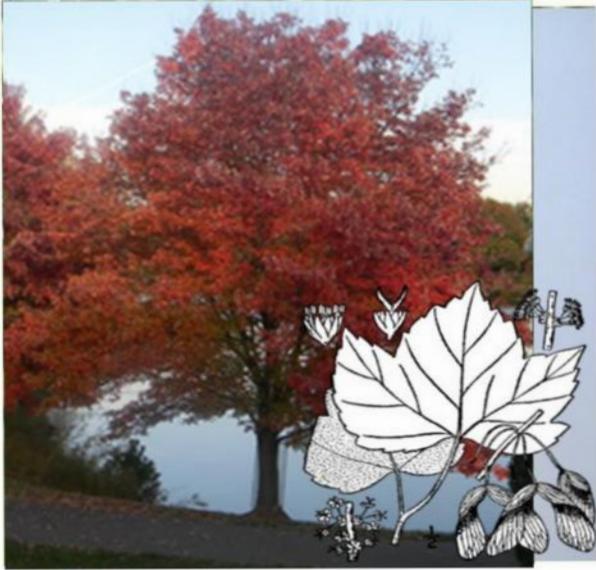
*Liquidambar styraciflua*



One of the most common trees in southeastern United States found on flood-plain soils.  
Lovely autumn colors of yellow, red, orange, maroon even on same tree.  
Important commercial hardwood used for furniture.

## Red Maple

*Acer rubrum*



Also known as Swamp Maple or Scarlet Maple.  
Height 60 to 90 feet.  
Very handsome shade tree displaying red in different seasons.  
Pioneers made ink and dyes from the bark.

## Black Gum

*Nyssa sylvatica*



Also known as Black Tupelo.  
Height 50 to 100 feet.  
Prefers moist soils.  
Fruit is berry-like maturing in Autumn and is consumed by many birds and animals.

## Red Oak

*Quercus rubra*



Look for pointed or spiky leaves. Field identification sometimes very difficult.  
Important food source for wildlife.  
Important in the production of furniture.  
Can reach 90 feet or more.

## Sweet Bay Magnolia

*Magnolia virginiana*



Small tree or shrub found along streams or in swamps.  
  
May be evergreen in the South.  
  
Very aromatic.

## Silky Dogwood

*Cornus amomum*



One of many dogwood species found in wetlands.

Usually no more than 20 feet tall and sometimes shrubby looking.

Berries in fall and winter important food source for birds and wildlife.

## American Hornbeam

*Carpinus caroliniana*



Also known as Ironwood.

Grows to about 30 feet.

Common understory tree in moist soils along swamps and streams.

Used in production of strong tool handles.

## Shadbush/Serviceberry

*Amelanchier canadensis*



Shrub or small tree may reach 25 feet.

Common in wooded swamps or wetland habitats. Important food for wildlife.

Very early springtime blooms said to signal that the Shad (fish) are running the rivers and streams to spawn.

## White Oak

*Quercus alba*



In North America about 90 species of Oak.

For White oak look for rounded leaves.

Can reach 90 feet or more.

Acorns important food source for wildlife.



Common Yarrow



Pokeweed



Virginia Creeper



Trumpet Creeper

*These are some of the wildflowers or vines seen during the summer in the Bayview Hills area although you will find them throughout the town of Chesapeake Beach.*

## Section 4

Continuing on the north side of Fishing Creek we will cross the bridge over Paw-paw Gut and follow the trail to the Richfield Station neighborhood.

### Black Locust

*Robinia pseudoacacia*



One of a large “family” of Legumes (beans). Flowers are showy white pea-like clusters and highly fragrant.

Twigs have thorns.

Often grows to more than 60 feet

## Swamp Rose

*Rosa palustris*



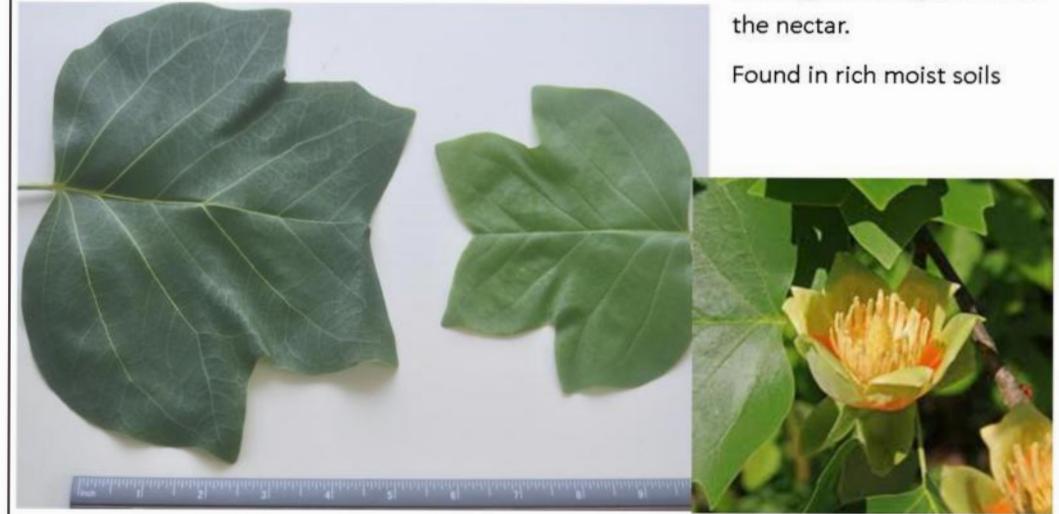
Pink flowers June to August.

Grows in tidal wetlands, swamps and streambeds.

Edible fruit very important foodsource for wildlife

## Tulip Poplar

*Liriodendron tulipifera*



Can reach 90 to 200 feet

Flowers in May when nesting hummingbirds favor the nectar.

Found in rich moist soils

## Devil's Walking Stick

*Aralia spinosa*



Also known as Prickley Ash.

Shrub or small tree about 25 feet.

Twigs covered with prickles (thorns).

Fruit clusters in fall important food source for birds.

## River Birch

*Betula nigra*



Also known as Red or Black Birch.

Grows 40 to 80 feet tall.

Ability to thrive on moist soils makes it useful for erosion control.

This is the only birch that occurs at low altitudes in the southeastern United States.

## Spicebush

*Lindera benzoin*



Shrub growing 6 to 16 feet in wooded slopes and floodplain forests.

Flowers yellow March to May.

Edible red berries in September/October.

High food value for wildlife.

## Paulownia

*Paulownia sp.*



Also known as Empress Tree. Native to Asia. Introduced in North America and considered invasive.

Tall tree 60 feet or more.

Very large leaves 9 to 24 inches.

Clusters of purple flowers in Spring.

## Northern Bayberry

*Morella pensylvanica*



Another shrub in the Bayberry Waxmyrtle family.

Evergreen.

Prefers moist soils.

Very aromatic.

## American Sycamore

*Platanus occidentalis*



Also known as American Planetree or Buttonball Tree.

Large tree can grow to 80 feet.

Prefers moist soils.

Flowers in distinctive balls with the leaves. Fruit balls will last all winter.

## Section 5

### South Side of Fishing Creek



*North side Fishing Creek trail in early autumn*



*Hibiscus blooming in August*

## Eastern Red Cedar *Juniperus virginiana*



Small to medium evergreen.  
Can grow to 50 feet.  
Aromatic wood used as insect repellent for storing clothing.  
The blue berries can be used as flavoring for foods and especially gin.

## Highbush Blueberry *Vaccinium corymbosum*



Tall shrub producing well known edible blue berries in mid to late summer.  
  
In addition to jelly, pies, and muffins, this delicious fruit is highly nutritious and makes excellent survival food.

## Red Oak *Quercus rubra*



Look for pointed or spiky leaves. Field identification sometimes very difficult.  
Important food source for wildlife.  
Important in the production of furniture.  
Can reach 90 feet or more.

## American Beech *Fagus grandifolia*



Large tree can grow to 80 feet.  
  
Prefers moist rich soils and are handsome shade trees.  
  
Edible beechnuts consumed by squirrels, raccoons, other mammals and game birds.

## Staghorn Sumac

*Rhus typhina*



Common in wooded swamps and stream edges.

Slightly taller than Smooth Sumac.

Provides food and cover for wildlife.

## Winged Sumac

*Rhus copallinum*



Also known as Shining sumac.

Very similar to Smooth sumac.

Small tree or shrub about 10 to 15 feet tall.

Common in field edges or other disturbed sites.

Provides food and cover for wildlife.

## Arrowwood Viburnum

*Viburnum dentatum*



Shrub or small tree in forest understory.

Grows 3 to 10 feet tall.

Flowers are showy white clusters in spring or early summer.

Fruit is important to birds.

Native Americans used the straight young stems to make arrows.

## Maple-leaved Viburnum

*Viburnum acerifolium*



Viburnums are members of the Honeysuckle family.

Viburnums flower in early spring and produce autumn berries important to birds and wildlife.

## Christmas Fern

*Polystichum acrostichoides*



Grows in clumps in shaded areas and on slopes.

Fronds are about two feet long. Stays green all year.

Formerly used as Christmas decorations.

## Holly

*Ilex X*



Many species of holly worldwide.

Ours is likely a hybrid.

Berries are usually red when ripe, mildly toxic to humans but are important food for birds.

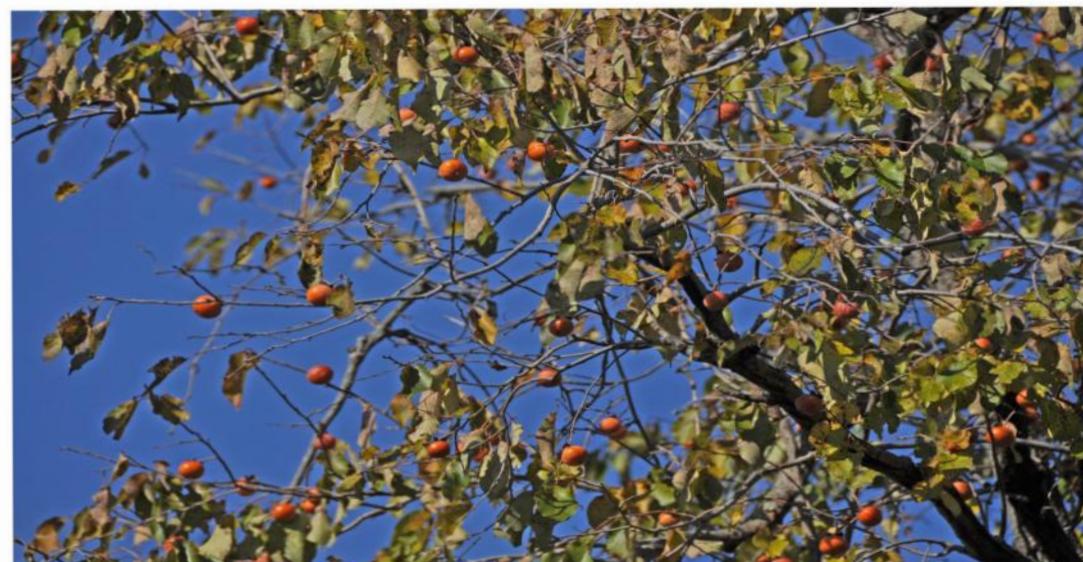
## Common Persimmon

*Diospyros virginiana*



Also known as Possumwood  
Small to medium size about 45 feet tall.

Edible orange to red fruit  
sweet after frost, but astringent when green.



*Persimmons are ripe early autumn*



Hibiscus



Rose mallow



Primrose



Poison Ivy (DON'T TOUCH)

## Section 6

### Brownie's Beach

We will now leave Fishing Creek and head south crossing Route 261 to another favorite park on the Bay front fondly known locally as Brownie's Beach. From the parking lot to the beach you will find a lovely wooded path.



## Chestnut Oak

*Quercus montana*



Bark and leaf similar to true chestnuts.

Large tree often 70 feet tall.

Acorns important food for wildlife.

## Red Oak

*Quercus rubra*



Look for pointed or spiky leaves. Field identification sometimes very difficult.

Important food source for wildlife.

Important in the production of furniture.

Can reach 90 feet or more.

## Black Locust

*Robinia pseudoacacia*



One of a large "family" of Legumes (beans). Flowers are showy white pea-like clusters and highly fragrant.

Twigs have thorns.

Often grows to more than 60 feet

## American Beech

*Fagus grandifolia*



Large tree can grow to 80 feet.

Prefers moist rich soils and are handsome shade trees.

Edible beechnuts consumed by squirrels, raccoons, other mammals and game birds.

## River Birch

*Betula nigra*



Also known as Red or Black Birch.

Grows 40 to 80 feet tall.

Ability to thrive on moist soils makes it useful for erosion control.

This is the only birch that occurs at low altitudes in the southeastern United States.

## Glade Fern

*Diplazium pycnocarpon*



Threatened species in our area.

THIS PLANT IS PROTECTED.

PLEASE ADMIRE BUT DO NOT TOUCH.

Visible only in warm months, dies back in winter weather.

## Black Oak

*Quercus velutina*



Very similar to Northern Red Oak.

Can grow 70 to 80 feet Tall.

Acorns important food for wildlife.

## Flowering Dogwood

*Cornus florida*



A springtime favorite.

Grows 15 to 30 feet tall.

Produces berries that are devoured by birds.

Cultivated as ornamentals for gardens

## American Sycamore

*Platanus occidentalis*



Also known as American Planetree or Buttonball Tree.

Large tree can grow to 80 feet.

Prefers moist soils.

Flowers in distinctive balls with the leaves. Fruit balls will last all winter.

## Eastern Baccharis

*Baccharis halimifolia*



Also known as Hightide bush, Sea myrtle, Groundselbush.

Shrub or small tree very tolerant of salty marshes and some flooding.

Tiny white flowers mature into small seeds in autumn.

Provides food and cover for wild-life.

## Green Ash

*Fraxinus pennsylvanicus*



Member of the olive family.

Common in moist wet woods.

Medium to large tree, can grow 40 to 60 feet or more.

## Eastern Baccharis (Hightide Bush) in bloom in September





Greenbriar

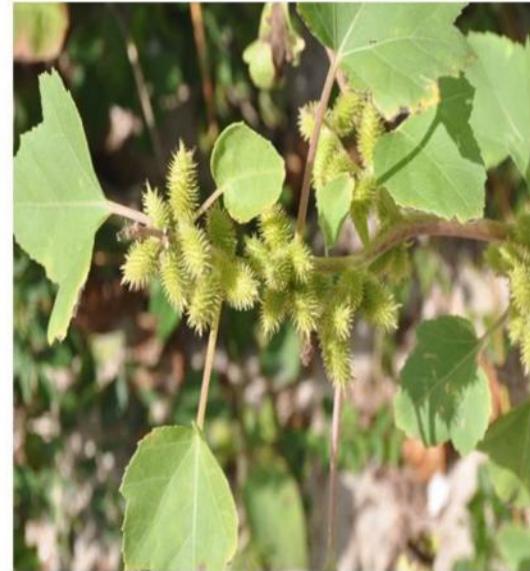


White wood aster

Seaside Goldenrod



Sea Burdock

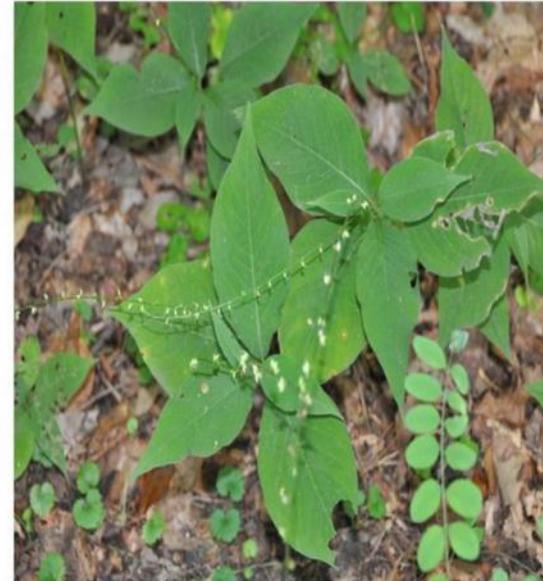


American Raspberry



Wineberry

Jumpseed



Acorns from Chestnut Oak



## Section 7

### Invasive Plants in the Town



Phragmites

Some of the plants described in previous sections of this guide are identified as “invasive” meaning that they are not plants native to North America.

For many reasons, these plants from other areas of the world were introduced here either by accident, or on purpose usually for ornamental reasons or soil control. Once established these plants flourished but unfortunately crowded out the native species. Often these invasive species are so successful they completely overtake and kill the native trees and plants and sometimes cover or damage buildings or other structures necessary for people.

Attempts to control invasive plants can be very labor intensive, costly, or nearly impossible.



Japanese stiltgrass *Microstegium vimineum*

Seen in Richfield Station and Brownie's Beach neighborhoods



Winged Burning Bush *Euonymus alata*

Seen at Trailhead



Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*

Seen at Brownie's Beach and other roadside locations.



Common Daylily *Hemerocallis fulva*

Seen everywhere in June. Lovely to see but needs vigilant gardening control.



Kudzu *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*

This is rampant along Bayfront Park Boardwalk from 14th St. to Brownie's Beach



This is what Kudzu can do!



English Ivy *Hedera helix*

Seen on steep wooded slopes between 15th and 17th Streets south side of Town



Bamboo *Bambusa vulgaris*

Member of grass family, native to Asia . Seen in several areas in Town, this at 15th and C Streets.



## Habitat



## REFERENCE BOOKS

The following books were consulted for much of the information used in this guide. You may want to consider one or more for your own further study.

Lippson, Alice Jane and Robert L., *Life in the Chesapeake Bay* (1984)

National Audubon Society, *Field Guide to Trees – Eastern Region* (1980)

National Park Service/US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas* (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2010)

Peterson, Lee, *A Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants of Eastern and Central North America* (1977)

Petrides, George, *A Field Guide to Eastern Trees* (1988)

Sibley, David Allen, *The Sibley Guide to Trees* (2009)

Stupka, Arthur, *Wildflowers in Color – Eastern Region* (1965)

Tiner, Ralph W., *Field Guide to Coastal Wetland Plants of the Southeastern United States* (1993)

Tiner, Ralph W., *Field Guide to Tidal Wetland Plants of the Northeastern United States and Neighboring Canada* (2009)

US Fish and Wildlife Service, *Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping—Chesapeake Bay Watershed* (2005)

White, Christopher P., *Chesapeake Bay—Nature of the Estuary* (1989)

INDEX		PAGE #
American beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	29, 37
American hornbeam/ironwood	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	19
American Raspberry	<i>Rubus strigosus</i>	43
American sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	25, 40
American three square	<i>Schoenoplectus (=Scirpus) pungens</i>	10
Arrowwood viburnum	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	31
Bamboo	<i>Bambusa vulgaris</i>	49
Black cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	15
Black locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	21
Black oak	<i>Quercus velutina</i>	38
Black or sour gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	16
Box elder (ashleaf maple)	<i>Acer negundo</i>	13
Burning bush	<i>Euonymus alata</i>	6, 45
Chesnut oak	<i>Quercus montana</i>	36, 43
Christmas fern	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	32
Coastal plain aster	<i>Symphotrichum racemosum</i>	8
Common Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis fulva</i>	46
Common persimmon	<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	33
Common Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	20
Devil's walking stick	<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	22
Eastern red cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	28
English Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	48
Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	39
Glade fern	<i>Diplazium pycnocarpon</i>	39
Green Ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanicus</i>	41
Greenbriar	<i>Smilax glauca</i>	42
Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	14
Hibiscus (rosemallow)	<i>Hibiscus moscheutos (H. palustris)</i>	27, 34
Highbush blueberry	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	29
Hightide bush	<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	6, 40, 41
Hybrid holly	<i>Ilex X</i>	32
Ironwood (musclewood)	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	19
Jananese Knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	46
Japanese stiltgrass	<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	45
Jumpseed	<i>Polygonum virginianum</i>	43

Kudzu	<i>Pueraria lobata</i>	47
Maple-leaved viburnum	<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	31
Northern bayberry	<i>Morella pensylvanica</i>	24
Northern red oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	17, 28, 37
Norway spruce	<i>Picea abies</i>	5
Paulownia	<i>Paulownia sp.</i>	25
Paw-paw	<i>Asimina triloba</i>	13
Phragmites	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	4, 44
Poison Ivy	<i>Toxicodendron radicans (L.)</i>	3, 34
Pokeweed	<i>Phytolacca americana</i>	20
Primrose	<i>Oenothera sp. (likely O. biennis )</i>	34
Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	16
Red mulberry	<i>Morus rubra</i>	5
River birch	<i>Betula nigra</i>	23, 38
Salt marsh cordgrass	<i>Spartina alterniflora</i>	9
Saltmarsh fleabane	<i>Pluchea purpurescens</i>	9
Sea burdock	<i>Xanthium echinatum</i>	42
Seaside goldenrod	<i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	42
Shadbush (Serviceberry)	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	18
Silky dogwood	<i>Cornus amomum</i>	12, 18
Smooth or staghorn sumac	<i>Rhus glabra or R. typhina</i>	30
Southern bayberry	<i>Morella caroliniensis</i>	14
Spicebush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	24
Swamp rose	<i>Rosa palustris</i>	22
Sweet bay magnolia	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	17
Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	15
Tidemarsch waterhemp	<i>Amaranthus cannabinus</i>	10
Trumpet creeper	<i>Campsis radicans</i>	20
Tulip poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	23
Virginia creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	20
White oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	19
White wood aster	<i>Aster divaricatus</i>	42
Wild rice	<i>Zizania aquatica</i>	8
Wineberry	<i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i>	43
Winged (shining) sumac	<i>Rhus copallinum</i>	30



