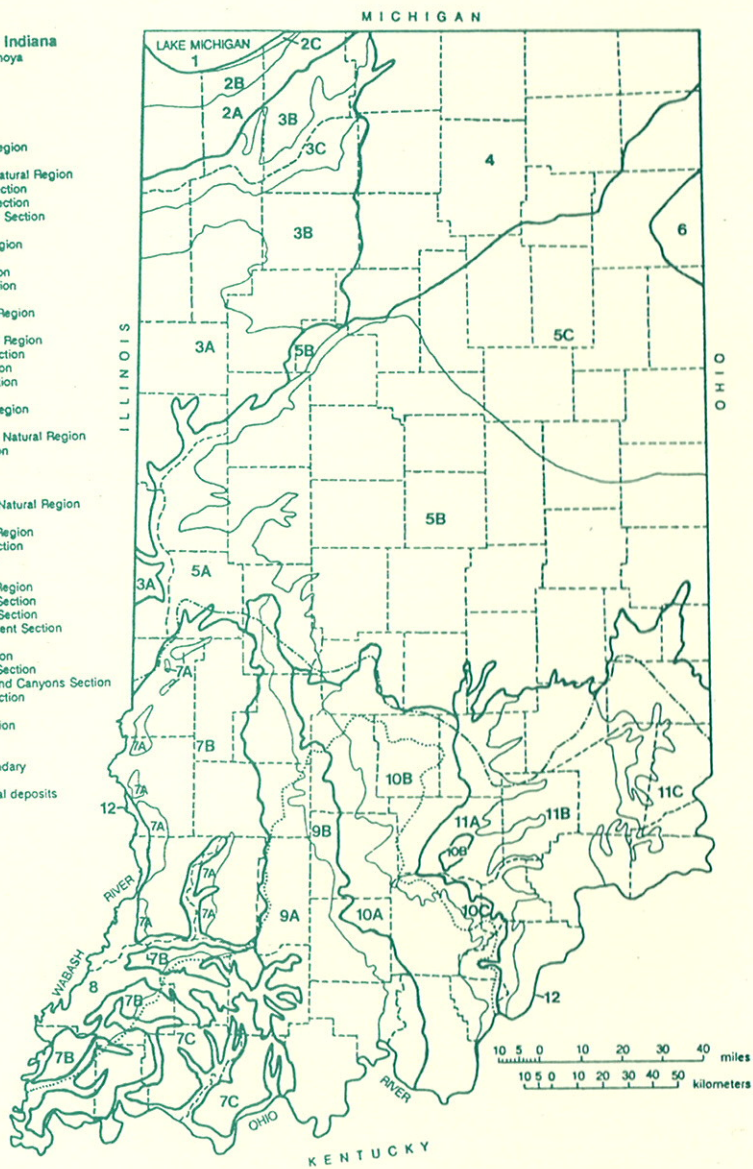


Natural Regions of Indiana
by Michael A. Homoya
1985

Legend

- 1 Lake Michigan Natural Region
 - 2 Northwestern Morainal Natural Region
A. Valparaiso Moraine Section
B. Chicago Lake Plain Section
C. Lake Michigan Border Section
 - 3 Grand Prairie Natural Region
A. Grand Prairie Section
B. Kankakee Sand Section
C. Kankakee Marsh Section
 - 4 Northern Lakes Natural Region
 - 5 Central Till Plain Natural Region
A. Entrenched Valley Section
B. Tipton Till Plain Section
C. Bluffton Till Plain Section
 - 6 Black Swamp Natural Region
 - 7 Southwestern Lowlands Natural Region
A. Plainville Sand Section
B. Glaciated Section
C. Driftless Section
 - 8 Southern Bottomlands Natural Region
 - 9 Shawnee Hills Natural Region
A. Crawford Upland Section
B. Escarpment Section
 - 10 Highland Rim Natural Region
A. Mitchell Karst Plain Section
B. Brown County Hills Section
C. Knobstone Escarpment Section
 - 11 Bluegrass Natural Region
A. Scottsburg Lowland Section
B. Muscatatuck Flats and Canyons Section
C. Switzerland Hills Section
 - 12 Big Rivers Natural Region
- Wisconsin glacial boundary
- - - Southern limit of glacial deposits



Post Oak-Cedar Nature Preserve Harrison-Crawford State Forest



Welcome to Post Oak-Cedar Nature Preserve. It is named for the 2 most common trees found in the area—the post oak, and the red cedar.

The 0.8 mi. long trail leads you clockwise, beginning and ending at the registration box.

This nature preserve is established for the purpose of preserving the area in its natural state. It is open for walking and observing only. There are no facilities—no drinking fountains, picnic tables, no restrooms.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PRESERVE'S NATURAL VALUES, PLEASE: REMAIN ON THE TRAIL, PROTECT ALL PLANTS AND ANIMALS, KEEP THE AREA FREE OF LITTER, AND OBSERVE THE BAN ON HUNTING, FIRES, CUTTING, PICNICKING, CAMPING, HORSE AND VEHICULAR USE.

There are 2 contrasting habitats in this 42-acre preserve. The dry upper slopes of limestone and sandstone are covered with slow-growing trees, shrubs and open glades. The lower slopes and valley are limestone, with more mesophytic (moist) forest.

The dry sites support post, chestnut, white, blackjack, scarlet and black oaks, mixed with red cedar. Several openings support prairie plants such as big and little bluestem, false dragonhead and coneflower, rather than woody plants. These openings are known as **glades** or **barrens**.

The moist sites at lower elevations have mixtures of sugar maple, hackberry, oaks, ashes, and hickories.



Trail Stations

1 This **red cedar** is one of the dominant trees in this dry part of the preserve, formerly in pasture. Note the short, sharp needles. Birds eat its blue, berry-like seed.



2 Much of the **topsoil has been lost by sheet and gully erosion** due to earlier clearing and grazing. Further loss is now being controlled by vegetation. Note the small island of soil being held by 2 red cedars, 35 ft. to the right. This soil, Corydon silt loam, is a typical red color. Medium in organic matter and rapid runoff makes it unsuitable for cropland or pasture. In many places outcrops of limestone bedrock can be seen.



3 **Fallen trees immediately begin to decay.** The process is hastened by the actions of fungi, bacteria and insects. As the decay process continues nutrients are released into the soil and used by the surrounding vegetation.

4 **Pignut hickory** is used to make tool handles and skis. This tree has dark, tight bark. The nuts are small and thin-husked.



5 The **shagbark hickory** differs from the pignut with its gray, shaggy bark coming loose in rough strips, and larger leaves. The larger thick husked nuts are relished by fox and gray squirrels.



6 This large **post oak** (30 ft. in front) is a good example of slow growth. It is estimated to be 300 years old. The burls on the trunk were formed by woody excretions around past abnormal bud growth. Examine the cross-shaped leaves in the post oak sapling 15 ft. to the left. Some people call it "Crucifixion Oak."



7 When the pioneers settled in Harrison County, they saw dry, treeless areas with stunted shrubs and plants. They called these spots **barrens**. These areas were much larger around Central Barren, Indiana, but resembled the grassy openings at this station. Wild roses grow on the exposed limestone here, while the portion with thin soil in front of you supports prairie plants such as big and little bluestem, false dragonhead and yellowish gentian.

Many of these, as well as 2 species of blazing stars, bloom in the nature preserve in late August and early September.

Please do not walk in the grassy areas.

8 **Before European settlement, fire frequently swept this dry oak woodland.** Today, as a part of management for this site, prescribed fire is used to mimic the fires that would naturally burn this area. Note the red cedar on the rock outcrop. This is normal habitat for the species. Before fire suppression young red cedar growing in open areas were killed by the fires. Cedar on cliffs and rocky outcrops could escape the fire and grow to maturity.

9 The thick simple leaf of the **blackjack oak** (25 ft. in front) is rusty yellow and hairy underneath. Compare these leaves with the post oak 25 ft. to the left and the 3-stemmed white oak 40 ft. to the left.



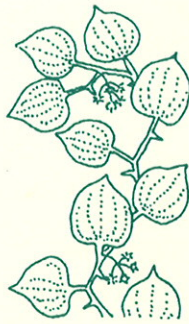
10 There are 2 stems evidently sprouting from the stump of a **scarlet oak** cut years ago. Note the dark bark with shiny, smooth, vertical ridges. Dead branches persist on the trunk.



A **white ash** sprout is located 15 ft. to the left.



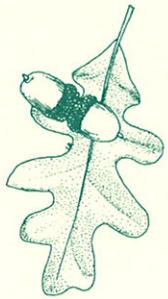
12 Vines of **roundleaf greenbrier** can be found on all sides of the trail at this marker. Thick oval leaves, large thorns and green stems distinguish this plant.



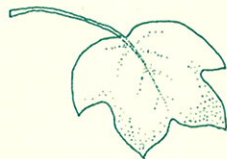
Wild grape can also be found in this area, with large, 3 shallow-lobed leaves.

13 You are standing at the point where the higher or overlying sandstone, limestone, and shale, belonging to the West Baden group of bedrock, meets the lower limestone of the Blue River group. Several slabs of sandstone are to the right and the lower outcropping of gray limestone is behind you. The parent material causes a mixture of different soil types including Zanesville, Berks, and Gilpin soil series. **This part of Indiana was never glaciated** and the bedrock was formed during the Mississippian Age about 250 million years ago.

11 Compare the soft, gray, scaly bark of this **white oak** to the scarlet oak at the last station.



14 The state tree, the **tulip poplar**, has gray furrowed bark. It is also known as poplar or yellow poplar. The large bell-shaped, greenish yellow flowers appear in May or June.



15 The **sugar maple**, a hard maple, has opposite simple, 5-lobed leaves.

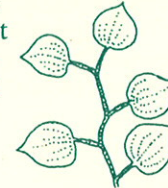
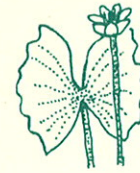


Twelve feet in back of you is a **blue beech**, or **American hornbeam** with smooth, gray, vertically ribbed bark.

Along the trail to the next station you will pass beds of **wild ginger** with dark green heart-shaped leaves,



twinleaf, with butterfly-shaped leaves, and twining **wild yamroot**. This part of the preserve is more moist and fertile and is a better growing site than the upper slope.



16 This **limestone ledge** runs for several hundred feet. Notice that numerous plants have been able to grow on the ledge despite the shallow soils and harsh conditions. Being able to occupy all available space helps assure the success of a species.

17 This forked tree, a **chinquapin oak**, belongs to the white oak group, but has leaves with shallow lobes instead of deep lobes.



A **bitternut hickory** with shallow, fissured, gray bark is 20 ft. to the left of this oak.

18 This **black walnut** is growing in the alluvial soil bordering Potato Run. Black walnut is the most valuable hardwood lumber in Indiana.



Hercules club or **devil's walking stick** is growing on the right side of this walnut.

Note the many stout spines on the stem. Each doubly compound leaf is attached to the main stem, and is up to 3 ft. long, making it the largest leaf found on any Indiana tree or shrub. **Manna grass**, with its drooping terminal seed heads, grows along the trail.



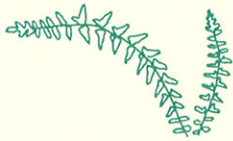
19The reddish bark with thin dark plates is distinctive with the **wild black cherry**, 10 ft. in front of you. It is also a source of valuable lumber. Birds and squirrels relish the small cherries.



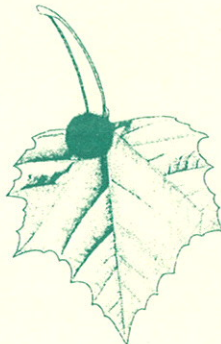
Twelve feet back, on a limestone ledge, is **fragrant sumac**, a shrub with tan branches and 3 yellow-green leaflets. Compare it with the darker green 3 leaflets of **poison ivy** on the higher ledge. Spicebush (station 25) and coralberry are other small shrubs.

20**Persimmons** have simple alternate leaves and reddish orange fruit. The dark, hard bark separates into squarish blocks. The fruit is eaten by many animals including opossum, raccoon, and red and gray foxes. White-tailed deer and occasional wild turkey and ruffed grouse may occur here.

Piliated woodpeckers can often be seen or heard. The small ferns with black stems that are seen here are **ebony spleenwort**.



21The **sycamore** prefers moist sites. The yellowish bark on the lower trunk changes to a smooth white bark above. The leaves are alternately attached to the twigs.



22The **dogwood**, a small understory tree, has gray, deeply fissured bark, broken into oblong plates. In spring the tree produces numerous, large white flowers. The red berries remain into winter, and are eaten by wildlife.



23Named after its use since pioneer days, the **shingle oak's** leaves differ from the others seen so far by being smooth and oblong rather than lobed. The bark is roughened by shallow fissures, and the acorns are small.



To the right 10 ft. is a **redbud**. This small tree is well known in spring when it is covered with pink blossoms. It never grows to a large size, but remains in the forest understory where it survives on the limited light that filters down between the leaves of the taller trees.



24Two examples of ferns found in this preserve can be seen here. The dark, evergreen ferns are **Christmas ferns** and the lighter colored ones are **beech ferns**.



Please do not pick any of the plants so that others may enjoy them.



25These stout branching shrubs are **Spicebush**. Their roughened bark is caused by corky circular structures called lenticels. They have pointed simple, oblong leaves. In spring bright yellow flowers appear before the leaves. In the fall it has a brilliant red fruit. A tea made from the twigs was used in pioneer medicine.



This ends the self-guiding trail. We hope you enjoyed the walk. Please register before you leave. If you do not want to keep this brochure please return it to the registration box. Thank you.

Directions

Take SR 62 about 12 mi. west of Corydon and turn south on SR 462. Just before entering the State Forest, turn south (left) onto Cold Friday Rd. (there is a small sign) and drive about 1 mi. to a marked parking lot.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
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