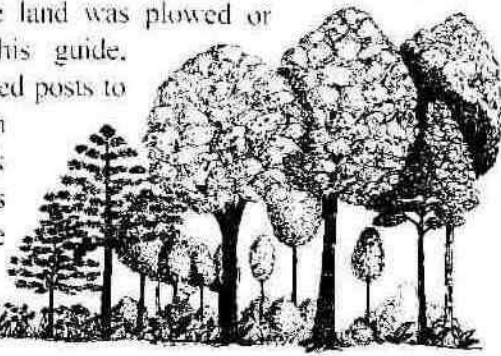


Cherry Lane Trail goes through an area which shows succession at work. Succession is the gradual, predictable changes in vegetation over time as bare soil gradually becomes a climax community. When the Naturealm became a park in 1964, much of the land was plowed or pasture. Follow this guide, stopping at numbered posts to observe changes in the area and to look for the many plants and animals that live near the trail.

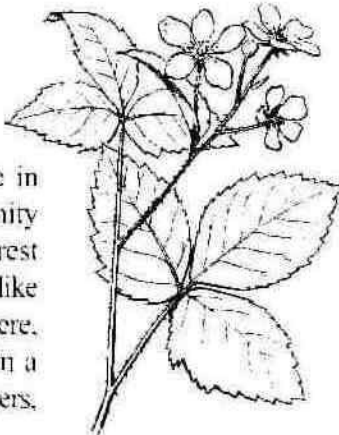


### 1. THE YOUNG FOREST

The trail passes through a young forest where small to mid-sized trees are growing. Trees of this size and type are found 20 to 30 years after forest replaces fields. Ash, cherry, dogwood and locust are common trees; shrubs include multi-flora rose and honeysuckle; vines include five-leaved Virginia creeper, three-leaved poison ivy and wild grape. Listen for the sounds of the animals attracted to this young forest: birds, chipmunks, squirrels and insects mixing with the song of the wind through the trees.

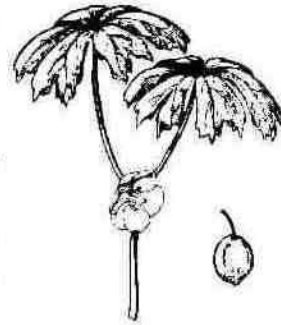
### 2. MEADOW

The meadow on the right of the trail shows what the vegetation of this part of the Naturealm may have looked like in the 1960's. This "edge" community attracts wildlife from both the forest and meadow. Sun-loving plants like **blackberry** and goldenrod grow here, providing food not usually found in a forest. Look and listen for grasshoppers, spiders, maybe a bluebird.

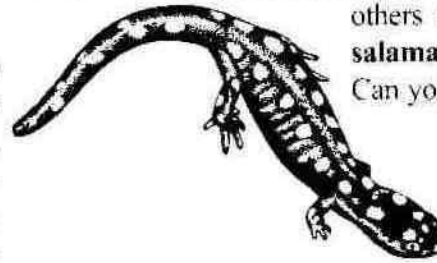


### 3. THE MATURE FOREST

Large oak, maple, beech and hickory trees grow here, typical of mature, upland forest. In this last stage of forest succession, a climax community develops. The type of dominant tree species is determined by soil type and climate. Because sunlight reaches the forest floor early in the spring before the tree leaves open, most forest wildflowers grow then. **May-apple** is one of the longer lasting spring flowers. In spring and early summer, look for its large umbrella shaped leaves.



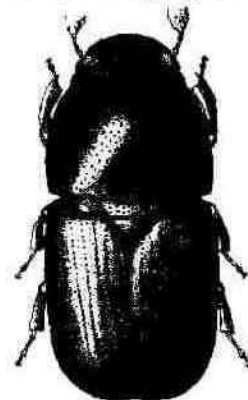
This a good place to look for the inhabitants of the forest floor. Small holes in the ground are dug by mice, chipmunks or moles; others animals like snakes and **salamanders** use them for shelter.



Can you observe woodland birds like robins, chickadees and woodpeckers, or a toad hopping by on a quest for a juicy worm?

### 4. NATURAL RECYCLING

Death is part of life in a healthy forest. When the forest giants fall, wood-boring insects like **bark beetles**, termites and carpenter ants move quickly into the decaying wood. Worms, millipedes, snails, shrews, salamanders, spiders and beetles live in and around fallen tree trunks. Along with fungus, mushrooms and bacteria, they help to break apart the tough wood fibers into smaller and smaller pieces. Eventually, these natural recyclers return the nutrients and organic matter of the wood and fallen leaves to the soil so living trees can use them again.



### 5. FERNS AND MOSS

Some interesting plants grow on the mature forest floor. Look for different kinds of mosses and **ferns** which thrive where it's cool and moist. Change in the mature forest happens slowly. The existing trees will gradually get old and die, but younger trees of the same mix of species will replace them. A climax forest is home to a great variety of species. Only if a huge windstorm blows down many trees or all the trees are cut down by loggers will succession begin again.



### 6. WHO LIVES HERE?

This suspension or "swinging" bridge carries hikers safely across a deep ravine. Because it was hard to cut down the trees in the ravine, some of the largest trees in the Naturealm are found here. At the far end of the bridge, follow the path to the right. Animals such as **woodpeckers**, squirrels, owls and chickadees have found homes in the trees along the edge of the ravine. The smaller woodpeckers (downy, hairy and red-bellied) chisel out round holes for their nests; owls, raccoons and gray squirrels inhabit the larger holes. Standing dead trees perform a valuable service by providing places for animals to live.



### 7. PINE TREES

Scotch pine trees were planted here (before 1964) by former owners, possibly to be used for Christmas trees. They are not native to this area. They gradually die and are being replaced by oaks, cherries, maples and beeches. Unlike the **pinces**, these native trees are suited to the area and will naturally reproduce.

