

HUNTSVILLE STATE PARK

# LOBLOLLY INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



Dogwoods

You can help TPWD conserve the resources of this park:

- ✦ Protect the integrity of our heritage; please use resources respectfully.
- ✦ Tread lightly on the natural resources by staying on the trails and not littering.
- ✦ Learn more about the park with literature available at the park headquarters.
- ✦ Take advantage of the interpretive activities, including guided nature hikes, evening presentations and special events.
- ✦ Become an active supporter by joining the Friends of Huntsville State Park or making a donation to the park.



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[www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntsville](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntsville)

Life's better outside.®

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Garden Spider  
*Argiope aurantia*

## WHO LIVES HERE?

The Pineywoods are home to many plants and wildlife.

Over 218 species of birds call the Pineywoods home.

## WHERE ARE THE ANIMALS?

They are here, all around you, but many of them may be hiding or resting. Some wild animals, especially many mammals, come out only at night or at dawn and dusk.

## HOW CAN I FIND THEM?

With practice and patience, you can find animals and their signs year-round.

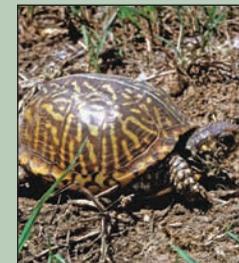
- ✦ Speak and walk quietly and slowly so you won't scare them.
- ✦ Look down for tracks and up for birds.
- ✦ Listen for the songs of birds, frogs and insects.
- ✦ Enjoy and respect wildlife; you are a guest in their home.

WELCOME TO THIS GLORIOUS AND TRANQUIL PATH THAT WILL TAKE YOU ON A JOURNEY THROUGH THE INTER-TWINED NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORIES OF THE PINEYWOODS. LEARN HOW THE PLANT LIFE PROVIDES FOR BOTH WILDLIFE AND HUMANS. THIS TRAIL'S NAME PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE LOBLOLLY PINES THAT DOMINATE THIS PARK. THIS NAME COMES FROM THE BRITISH SAILOR SLANG FOR THICK GRUEL, WHICH WAS LATER APPLIED TO MUDHOLES AND SWAMPY AREAS IN WHICH THE LOBLOLLY PINE TREE GROWS.

Red-shouldered Hawk  
*Buteo lineatus*



Ornate Box Turtle  
*Terrapene ornata*



Southern Leopard Frog  
*Rana sphenoccephala*



Eastern Fox Squirrel  
*Sciurus niger*





### 1. ROOSEVELT'S TREE ARMY

In the early 1930s, high demand for timber nearly depleted this area's pine forest. The 1930s also brought the Great Depression, which inspired President Franklin Roosevelt to create the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as a means of boosting the economy and providing jobs for young men.

Ironically, the overcut pine forest provided a perfect site for the CCC. Companies 899 and 1823 came here and renewed the forest by planting seedlings, many of which surround you today. The CCC also built the roads, boathouse, lodge and other structures of Huntsville State Park, which opened in 1956. The park and the wilderness that surround it provide beauty and solitude for thousands of visitors.

### 2. PROVIDEABLE PINES

This region of Texas is considered the Pineywoods region. The dominating trees are pines, with the loblolly being the most abundant. This evergreen can grow up to 170 feet and has long, needle-like leaves that usually grow in clusters of three. The pinecone's seeds are a favorite of squirrels and birds. The seeds are usually carried to other locations by wind locomotion, and when they land, they are able to grow into trees.



### 3. THE VOMIT TREE

Does drinking yaupon holly tea cleanse your system? Native Americans used the leaves and stems to brew tea for purification and unity ceremonies, which included vomiting after the tea was consumed. Europeans incorrectly believed the yaupon holly that caused vomiting, thus

lending the plant its Latin name, *Ilex vomitoria*. The vomiting was self-induced or because of other ingredients added; it doesn't actually cause vomiting! While

we don't brew yaupon holly tea, keep your eyes open for animals devouring other parts of the plant; the bright red berries aren't for human consumption but birds love them.

### 4. CHEWY TREE

This tree is easy to recognize if you look at its starry leaves and spiky, woody fruit. What attracts us to these trees is the beautiful colors the leaves turn in the fall. From yellow all the way to purple, this tree is a rainbow of natural beauty. Wildlife are attracted to it for the seeds that can be found in a protective spiky ball. But where does it get its name? Settlers used to scrape the bark off the trunk and collect the resin. The resin was then mixed with fruit, and a gummy concoction was made which we now call chewing gum; hence, the tree's name—sweetgum tree.



### 5. BEAUTIFUL BERRIES



Many of the plants you find in the Pineywoods grow beautiful berries. However, although the berries look inviting and good enough to eat, many of the berries will make us sick if we eat them. So enjoy the berries' beautiful colors and shapes but leave the tasting to the wildlife. One particular shrub along this trail is the American beautyberry. It bears fleshy, bright pink and purple berries that are very enticing, which is where this plant gets its name. The berries are a favorite of white-tailed deer and over 216 species of songbirds. The leaves are covered in a fuzz that feels a little like sandpaper and have been reported to ward off mosquitoes, ants and ticks when crushed and rubbed on skin.

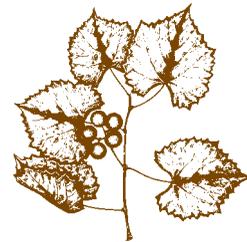
### 6. ALL BARK AND NOBITE

The flowering dogwood is probably our most ornamental native tree in Texas. In spring the dogwood displays showy masses of white flower bracts; summertime brings layers of



bright green foliage; and autumn brings dark red leaves and bright red berries that remain on the branches after the leaves have fallen off. The predominant use of dogwood by Native Americans was for making arrows, due to its shock resistance. Early inhabitants would dry and powder the bark of the root and smaller branches and use it as a tonic, stimulant, antiseptic and astringent. Chewing the bark was said to relieve headaches and was used for malarial fevers and chills. Its wood was also used for toothbrushes and toothpaste. The flowering dogwood is considered the best soil improver among eastern North American trees.

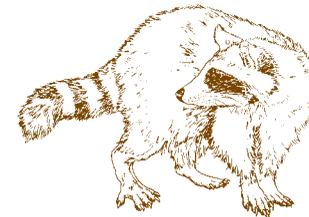
### 7. FOREST JAM



The muscadine grapevine is very plentiful around the park, using large trees as ladders to climb up and reach the sunlight. The grapes on this vine are edible, and used to make juice, jellies, jams, syrups, wine and dessert toppings. Animals enjoy them in a much simpler form, eating them after they ripen and fall to the ground.

### 8. BURROW, SWEET BURROW

As you walk through the Pineywoods you may notice downed trees, holes at the bottom of standing trees, and even dead standing trees. These are important to many species of wildlife here.



They provide dens and nesting areas for wildlife such as woodpeckers, raccoons, snakes, lizards, opossums and many more. Not only do these trees provide structure for wildlife, but they are also a great food source for smaller wildlife such as turtles, insects and even other trees! Stumps and other rotting debris are used as nurseries by seedlings to absorb nutrients that the rotten debris leaves behind. Look at this fallen pine tree and see what you think made those little holes, and look around the tree for new seedlings.

### 9. SASSY SASSAFRAS!



Once considered a cure all in Europe, sassafras was used in a tea, called saloop, to cure all ailments. Native Americans used the bark infusions to treat worms, colds, diarrhea and rheumatism. It was also used to treat skin diseases and to poultice wounds and sores and as a mouthwash or gargle for a sore throat. It has been used to flavor candies, toothpastes, soaps, lotions, perfumes, and also used as postage stamp glue, but perhaps the best known use is flavoring root beer. The usage stopped when researchers found that safrole caused liver cancer in rats and mice and all uses of the plant were banned. However, today safrole-free sassafras extracts are still made for root beer.



## BE AWARE OF POISON IVY

This three-leaved plant has clusters of tiny white flowers in spring, producing cream colored or white waxy berries in late summer. All parts of the plant contain urushiol, which causes severe rashes and itching.

Remember the saying: "Leaves of three, let it be!"