

As **temperatures fall** and the days shorten, most of Virginia's native plants go dormant for the autumn and winter months. Deciduous trees shed their leaves, and many perennials retreat underground.

Despite the promise of frost and snow there are still signs of life everywhere. Some hardy plants have evolved the ability to tough out winter's frigid weather while others leave behind conspicuous stems, seeds, and berries.



Enjoy the trail's austere beauty, and learn to recognize some of winter's most distinctive plants with the help of this ID guide!

These icons denote the most common locations of each plant along the trail:



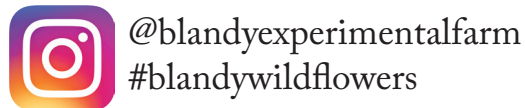
Identify more plants and share your observations online!



The citizen science app iNaturalist is a free resource to help you identify more plants not in this brochure, and contribute to citizen science programs in the area! Just download the free app from Google Play or the App Store to get started.

- Upload your photos of plants and wildlife to get suggestions on possible IDs.
- Join the 'Blandy Experimental Farm' project to share your observations with our scientists and other guests.
- Learn from other outdoor enthusiasts and contribute to citizen science projects!

Take an interesting photo? Tag us on social media!



The Plants and Trees of Fall and Winter



Plant Identification Guide



Possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*) - Shrub with bright red holly berries. Leaves are alternate, rounded, and glossy green. They eventually fall in mid-winter. 🌳



Rosebay Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*) - Evergreen shrub with broad, leathery leaves. Leaves curl up in very cold weather. Only near woodland entrance. 🌳



Smooth Sumac (*Rhus glabra*) - Small shrub with clusters of red berries at the top of each mature stem. Berries remain through the winter until birds eat and disperse them ☀️



Adam's Needle (*Yucca filamentosa*) - Clumps of stiff, evergreen yucca leaves. No aboveground stem. Curly fibers along edges of leaves. 2-5 ft tall. 🌳 ☀️



Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*) - Clumps of smooth, round leaves with flat-toothed edges. These basal leaf clusters remain green all year long. 1-2 inches tall. 🌳



Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) - Small to Large tree with simple, short thorns on branches (<1 in long). Often grows in dense colonies in the meadow. ☀️



Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) - Low-growing evergreen fern. Each leaflet (or pinna) has a unique 'thumb' near the base that no other fern has. 🌳



Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) - Understory tree which produces large quantity of brown, pea-like seedpods. Gray bark has reddish hue on mature trees. 🌳 ☀️



Tall Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) - Tall perennial with sprays of fluffy white seed clusters. Fluff will lessen through the winter as seeds are dispersed. ☀️ 💧



Eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) - Evergreen tree with branching, scale-like leaves. Reddish, peeling bark. Branches may have small blue berries. 🌳 ☀️



American Beech (*Fagus grandiflora*) - Deciduous tree that retains its oval shaped, toothed brown leaves all winter. Bark is very smooth and gray. 🌳



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) - Large shrub only found in wetlands. Reddish-brown seedpods dangle from most branches. 💧



Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) - Small tree with thread-like yellow flowers. Blooms through December. Found only near the chimney in woodland. 🌳



American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) - Deciduous tree with flaky outer bark that falls off upper branches, revealing smooth, white inner bark. 🌳 💧



Cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) - Tall plant that grows in water. 'Corn dog' like seed pods become fluffy later in the season as the tiny seeds are dispersed. 4-8 ft tall. 💧



Plantainleaf Sedge (*Carex plantaginea*) - Grasslike plant with very wide blades (>1 inch across) that grows in clumps. Up to 1 ft tall. 🌳



Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) - Tree with very long, sharp thorns (>3 inches). Thorns often emerge in clusters from the trunk and branch into more thorns. ☀️



New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) - Dead stems visible, which end in tufts of tan hair. Tufts gradually disappear as seeds are dispersed. 4-6 ft tall. 💧