

Mixed Oak Forest

This black oak-white oak-dominated forest community is found predominantly on sandy soils, ridge areas, valley bluffs and rocky uplands covered by thin soils. At the time of European settlement, American chestnut, white oak, black oak, red oak, shagbark hickory, scarlet oak, blackgum, sweet pignut hickory, sassafras, black cherry and hop hornbeam dominated the forest type. American chestnut disappeared from the forest when the chestnut blight was introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century. Chestnut oak is a frequent member of this community along the escarpment that marks the transition from the Lake Plain to the Allegheny Plateau. Hemlock and/or white pine are present on erosion-resistant knobs in Lake County, OH, valley bluffs above steep cliffs from the lower Vermilion River valley, east into western Pennsylvania, and locally on sandy Lake Plain beach ridges from eastern Cuyahoga County, OH into Pennsylvania.

Common understory shrubs within the forest are flowering dogwood, common lowbush blueberry, huckleberry, maple-leaf viburnum, common serviceberry, and witch hazel. Frequent evergreen understory shrubs are partridgeberry and wintergreen. Typical understory herbaceous members of the forest are common bluets, stargrass, prostrate tick trefoil, shining bedstraw, several species of bush clover, Indian cucumber-root, whorled loosestrife, blue-stemmed goldenrod, large-leaved aster, smooth Solomon's seal, long-spurred violet, Pennsylvania sedge, round-leaved hepatica, bloodroot, four-leaved milkweed, poke milkweed, trailing arbutus, and downy skullcap. Typical ferns are bracken fern and hay-scented fern. Within the primary snowbelt east of Cleveland and the secondary snowbelt south of Cleveland, Canada mayflower is a very common member of the community.

Large, contiguous tracts of Mixed Oak Forest are a refuge for scarlet tanagers, cerulean warblers, hairy woodpeckers, and wild turkeys. One can also see black bears, red bats, and ring-necked snakes.

Where to Go

- ☞ Cascade Valley and O'Neil Woods, Metro Parks Serving Summit County (Summit County, OH)
- ☞ Chapin Forest, Lake Metroparks (Lake County, OH)
- ☞ Forest Hill Park, East Cleveland (Cuyahoga County, OH)
- ☞ Harriet Keeler Woods at Brecksville Reservation, Cleveland Metroparks (Cuyahoga County, OH)
- ☞ Punderson State Park (Geauga County, OH)
- ☞ Singer Lake Bog of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (Summit County, OH)
- ☞ Virginia Kendall area, Cuyahoga Valley National Park (Summit County, OH)



Scarlet tanager



Gray tree frog



Cerulean warbler



Black bear



Spring beauty



Flowering dogwood



Johnson Woods State Nature Preserve (Wayne County, OH)