



Bigtooth aspen



Red maple

Maine Coast Heritage Trust

Take-Along Forest Guide

What types of trees can you find in Maine?

Maine is a transition zone between temperate hardwood (deciduous) forests to the south and boreal coniferous forests to the north. Much of the immediate coastline and islands support a forest community type known as Maritime Spruce-Fir Forest. Here, you'll see red and white spruce, balsam fir, and depending on the soil and climate, red oak, white pine, red maple, and white and yellow birch. The ocean has a moderating effect on climate – slightly cooler summers and slightly warmer winters mean that northern species like spruce and southern species like oak and pine can intermingle. In wetter soils, you might find white cedar; on a dry, rocky site, you could see pitch pine.

Take our guide to these MCHT preserves to see the variety of plant and animal species found in Maine's coastal forests!



Red oak



SOUTHERN MAINE Woodward Point, Brunswick

This 87.5-acre preserve includes a 1.5-mile network of trails that lead across open fields and through forest to the water's edge.

Plants to look out for:

- An eastern-hemlock grove, where 1,000 beetles were recently released to prey on the hemlock woolly adelgid, a non-native invasive insect.
- Tall white pines in the western field that serve as perches for birds of prey, including eagles.

Animals to look out for:

- Eagles
- Porcupines
- Foxes



MIDCOAST Witherle Woods, Castine

Witherle Woods offers pleasant views of Penobscot Bay, via more than 6.5 miles of trails that gradually wind through the changing forests of this coastal preserve.

Plants to look out for:

- Paper-birch trees, known for their peeling white bark.
- Red-raspberry shrubs that like sandy loam soil.
- British soldier lichen, named for the bright-red reproductive structures at the ends of their stems.

Animals to look out for:

- White-throated sparrows
- Northern parulas
- A pair of ospreys



DOWNEAST Bog Brook Cove, Cutler and Trescott

Bog Brook Cove has gravel and cobble beaches, spruce-fir forests, breathtaking views of the Bold Coast, and 5.5 miles of trails, including a universally accessible trail.

Plants to look out for:

- Tamarack trees, the only native deciduous conifer, with needles that turn yellow in the fall and drop off, growing back the next spring, soft and green.
- Bigtooth-aspen grove, with leaves that flip-flop back and forth,

or "quake," due to their flat petiole, or leaf stem.

Animals to look out for:

- Beavers
- Deer
- Moose
- Otters (Look for their scat! It is heavy with shells.)

Farming and logging dating back to the 17th century left a lasting impact on New England forests. Flip over to learn why forest preservation is important!

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND

Babson Creek, Somesville

This 36-acre preserve features meadows and a salt marsh lined by a predominantly spruce-fir forest.

Plants to look out for:

- Spartina, a genus of

grass that occupies the salt marsh, an uncommon habitat type on MDI.

- Ghost forest, or standing trees that slowly die in place as seawater overtakes the fresh water they rely upon.

- Milkweed, in seed, with big, rustic, puffball-like seed pods.

Animals to look out for:

- Sandpipers
- Kingfishers
- Foxes
- Deer





Why is forest preservation important?

Maine Coast Heritage Trust is a nonprofit land-conservation organization protecting and caring for vital lands on the coast of Maine, including forested areas, which can contribute to slowing the effects of climate change. "It's well understood that trees pull carbon dioxide out of the air," says former MCHT midcoast project manager Dan Hohl, who recently joined the New England Forestry Foundation as a climate-smart commodities program forester. "It's part of the process of photosynthesis. They take in carbon dioxide, and they utilize that to grow. The healthier your forests, the more trees

that are growing, the more carbon dioxide is being taken up."

Forests can help mitigate the impact of climate change on humans, by protecting against hotter, drier conditions in simple ways, like providing shade. Healthy forests will also continue to help provide clean drinking water by preventing the erosion of sediment into waterways. "We don't know how climate change is going to impact everything," Hohl says. "And we don't know what the pace of that change is going to be. But we know it's happening. By protecting these areas, we're giving our forests a chance to exist in the future."

DID YOU KNOW A TYPICAL FOREST CONSISTS OF THREE LAYERS?

The Understory includes smaller plants like ferns, mosses, grasses, and eye-catching species like starflower and Canada mayflower (both common on the coast) and shrubs like viburnums, blueberry, huckleberry, and bayberry. Seedling trees are also present in this layer.

The Midstory is made up of young trees – the future canopy – and larger shrubs like shadbush. Some trees, like ironwood and hop hornbeam, naturally stay small and stay part of the midstory.

The Canopy consists of mature trees and, in a healthy forest, includes a number of large standing dead trees. Called snags, they are an important habitat for a variety of wildlife.

You can identify a white pine by counting the bundle of needles. Five needles = white pine!



To learn more about Maine Coast Heritage Trust preserves and to download this guide, visit mcht.org/nature-guide.



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