


1 Throughout the trail you may find poison ivy, *Toxicodendron radicans*, on and around the path. You can avoid receiving the painful rash if you remember a few simple identification tips. The poison ivy plant has three almond shaped leaves. The middle leaf has a stem significantly longer than the other two. Young plants generally have light green leaves, which turn to a darker color as they mature. In addition, mature leaves will often be somewhat shiny. In the fall, leaves change color to yellow, orange, or red. Furthermore, the clusters of leaves alternate the side of the vine they are on, and the stem does not have thorns. Poison ivy can grow as a shrub up to about four feet tall, as groundcover up to ten inches high, or as a vine climbing on other plants. The entire plant, the leaves, vine, and roots, contains urushiol that causes skin irritation. If you see a poison ivy plant make sure you stay away in order to avoid a painful rash.

2 Notice how this tree has two distinct vines on it. The larger vine is a Concord grape vine. Concord grapes are a cultivar of *Vitis labrusca*, commonly known as the fox grape, and were developed by Ephraim Wales Bull in 1849 in Concord, Massachusetts. He examined over 20,000 seedlings to find what he thought was the perfect grape. The Concord grape is used in most grape juice and jelly products. However, it is not often used in wines due to its foxy, or musky, flavor. Concord grapes fully ripen around October.

3 Several of the trees in front of you are big-tooth aspen trees, or *Populus grandidentata*. The base of this tree has the appearance of a pine, whereas the top looks like a white birch. The leaves on this tree, as the name implies, are fairly big with large irregular teeth on the edges. This tree grows relatively quickly, with an average lifespan of approximately 70 years. Because of



its quick growth, the big-tooth aspen becomes a pioneer species that quickly dominates the area after a disturbance, such as a fire. However, if there is a prolonged absence of a major disturbance, other trees will replace aspens. This is because the big-tooth aspen needs much sunlight to grow, and other more shade tolerant trees can overtake the area.

4 The tree seen here is an American chestnut tree, or *Castanea dentata*. This tree is rare due to a blight that nearly wiped out all of these trees. The blight was introduced to North America in the early 20th century, most likely from imported trees, and was first discovered in 1905 by mycologist William Murrill. Nearly all mature American chestnut trees have been destroyed, but because the root system is resistant to the fungus that causes the blight, the species has survived. Before the blight, the chestnut tree was one of the most important hardwood timber trees in this region; it is estimated that one out of every four trees in the Appalachian Mountains was an American chestnut. Sprouts can live long enough to grow seeds before dying. Some Japanese and Chinese chestnut trees are more resistant to the blight, however. Scientists are working to create hybrids of these trees to create a blight-resistant American chestnut. In addition, groups such as The American Chestnut Foundation aim to reintroduce blight-resistant chestnuts into their original range.

5 The pond before you is home to a wide variety of wildlife. It serves as a habitat to many different species of fish, turtles, birds, frogs, and insects. The water from this pond makes its way northwest until it meets up with the Hop Brook system. This becomes the Wash Brook System, a tributary of the Sudbury River.



Illustration by Adam Blake

SUDBURY VALLEY TRUSTEES

Hop Brook Natural Area

Interpretive Trail



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Hop Brook Natural Area Framingham

In 2010, as part of his Eagle Scout Project, Matthew Barnes of Sudbury Troop 63 created an interpretive brochure and posted markers along the trail that correspond with the points in his writings and on this map. Materials for his project were generously donated by Sudbury Lumber and Home Depot in Marlborough.

Directions

- From the intersection of Edgell Road and Edmands Road in Framingham, follow Edmands Road west.
- After 0.5 miles, turn left at Winch Street. Continue for 0.7 miles until Winch Street intersects Grove Street, and proceed right onto Grove Street.
- After 0.2 miles you should see a field on the right with room to park on either side of the road.
- There is an SVT sign that is hung on a tree marking Hop Brook Natural Area.
- Please do not block the entrances to the fields when parking.

