

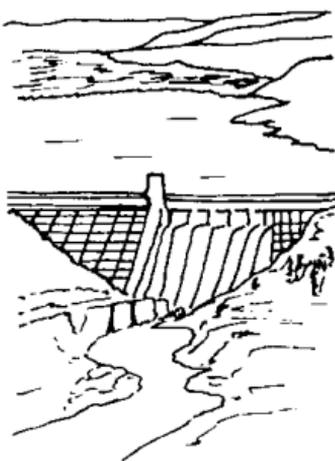
I hear faintly the cawing of a crow far, far away, echoing from some unseen wood-side, as if deadened by the springlike vapor which the sun is drawing from the ground. It mingles with the slight murmur of the village, the sound of children at play, as one stream empties gently into another, and the wild and tame are one. What a delicious sound! It is not merely crow calling to crow, for it speaks to me too.

I am part of one great creature with him; if he has voice, I have ears. I can hear when he calls, and have engaged not to shoot nor stone him if he will caw to me each spring.

Journal
January 12, 1855
Henry David Thoreau

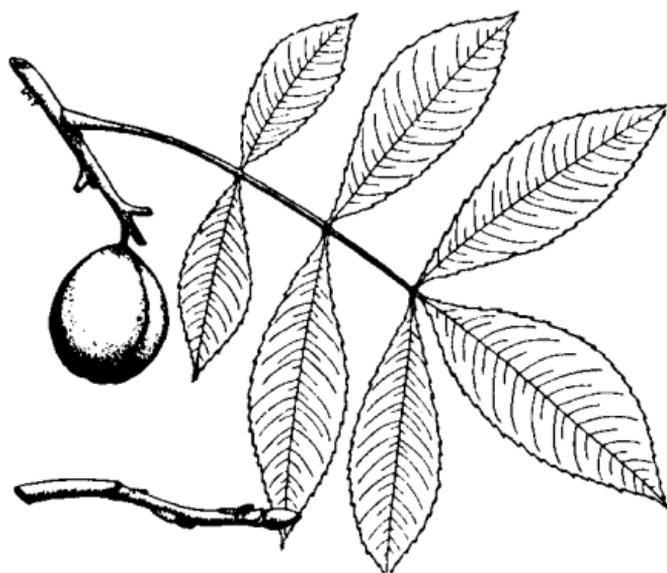


The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers welcomes you to Greers Ferry Lake and Mossy Bluff Trail. This trail meanders approximately 1.6 miles (round trip) along a wooded bluff overlooking the Little Red River below Greers Ferry Dam. The overlook at the trail's end is an excellent place to rest and enjoy the view before your walk back to the Visitor Center. The forest world is truly a fascinating place. How long it will remain this way depends on each and every one of us. We ask your cooperation in helping us to maintain the natural integrity of the forest, this trail and the plants and animals for whom this forest is home.

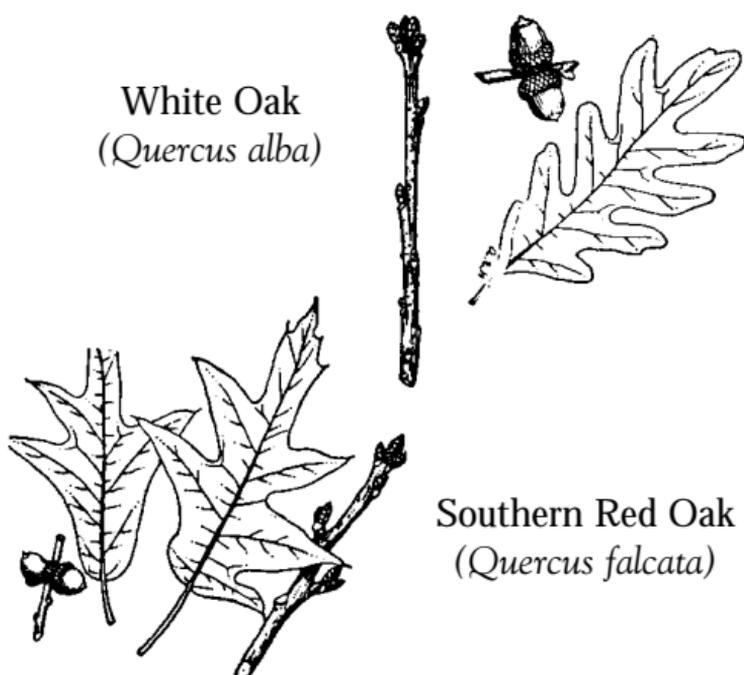


Forests of the Ozark Mountain Range consist mostly of oak and hickory. Mossy Bluff Trail is in the midst of one such forest. The predominant tree species are members of either family. The hickory most likely to be seen along the trail will be:

Black Hickory (*Carya texana*)



A classification chart showing the difference between the two basic groups of oaks, White Oaks and Red Oaks, follows:



The oaks are variously divided into groups, but the usual division makes two groups: 1. the WHITE OAKS and 2. the RED OAKS. The best lumber is usually furnished by members of the white oak group, but both may be of considerable value. The following classification will show at a glance the differences between the members of these two groups of oaks.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE ARKANSAS OAKS

| Character | White Oak Group | Red Oak Group | |
|----------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Leaves | Lobes, if present, rounded. No bristles on tips. | Lobes, if present, angular. A bristle at tip of Leaf and each lobe. | |
| Acorns | Require only ONE season to mature, so ripen among leaves of current year. Frequently sweet and edible. | Require 2 seasons to mature, some ripen on twigs of previous season. Usually bitter and inedible. | |
| Wood | Light colored, pores closed, durable in the ground. | Dark colored, pores open, NOT durable in the ground. | |
| Bark | Usually light gray. | Usually dark, even black. | |
| Principal Arkansas Species | White Post Bur Overcup Chinkapin Swamp Chestnut | Northern Red Southern Red Cherrybark Nuttall Shumard Blackjack | Pin Black Water Willow Shingle |

WARNINGS

1. The trail is approximately 1.6 miles in length, round trip.
2. The trail is rocky in places, so wear comfortable, sturdy shoes.
3. For your safety and that of the forest **PLEASE STAY ON THE TRAIL**. There are sheer dropoffs and poison ivy just off the trail. Occasionally a snake is seen on the trail.
4. Parents, keep a close watch on your children.
5. Please do not pick, collect, or disturb any of the plants or animals along the trail so that others may enjoy them.

Remember, "Take only pictures, leave only footprints."

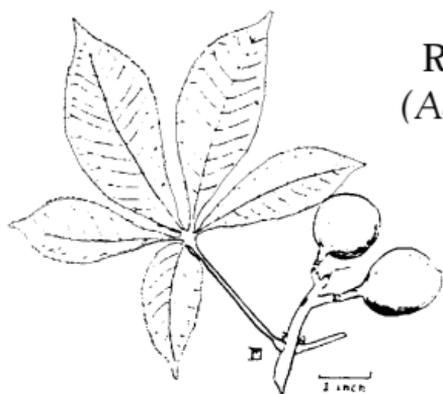
DON'T TOUCH



Though nature is fragile, she is not defenseless. Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*) contains a toxic substance which causes skin inflammation on many people who come in contact with it. A very confusing

plant, it ranges from low or depressed to bushy, shrubby or vining types, often climbing to the tops of trees. It can occur in almost any habitat. Although hazardous to humans, it is beneficial to wildlife. Its small yellowish berries are eaten by squirrels, turkeys, quail, and deer. A good rule of thumb:

LEAFLETS OF THREE, LET IT BE.



Red Buckeye
(*Aesculus pavia*)

This small tree or shrub rarely reaches heights over 25 feet. It is very ornamental when in bloom. The

dark red flower clusters stand erect in contrast to the dark green foliage. It produces a brown shiny nut or seed which some folks keep as a good luck charm. It gets its name from the light colored spot on the seed.

Except for ornamental purposes, the tree is of no commercial value. Like most other species of buckeye, the red buckeye is poisonous. The American Indians threw powdered seeds and crushed branches of this plant into pools of water to stupefy fish. The fish would then rise to the surface and be easily caught.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOW ILLEGAL

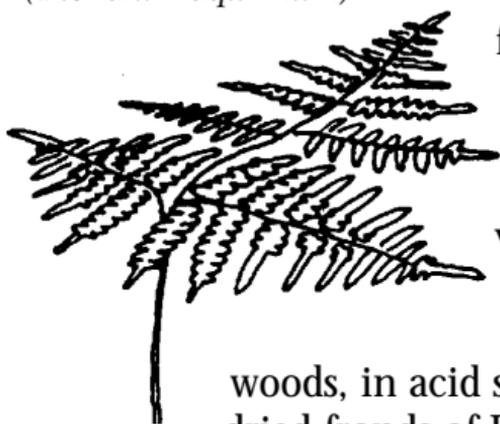
Across the trail from the red buckeye, you will see a patch of Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), a plant that some people confuse with poison ivy.



The autumn foliage of this plant turns from a dull rose and purple to a deep crimson. It is an excellent vine for covering fences, walls, trellises and other objects. The flowers are visited by honeybees, the young tendrils are eaten by wild turkeys, and the foliage is browsed by white-tailed deer, making this an important plant to wildlife.

Bracken

(*Pteridium aquilinum*)

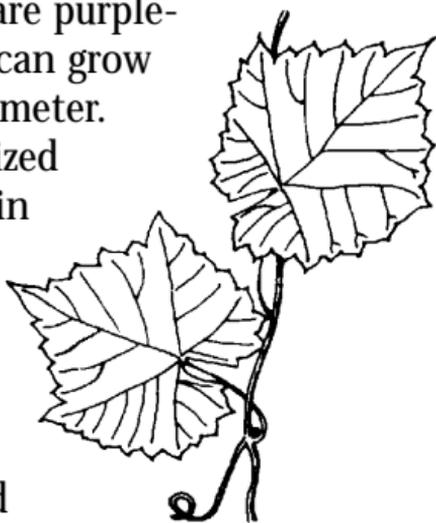


This large coarse fern has broad, generally triangular-shaped fronds. This variety is found mostly in rocky or dry open

woods, in acid soil. Fresh and dried fronds of Bracken Fern are poisonous to stock. This young leafy fronds, when thoroughly cooked, may be eaten like asparagus.

Many species of wild grapes are native to North America. By far the largest of these in this area is the muscadine. The berries, with a thick, tough skin, are purple-black to bronze and can grow up to 1/2 inch in diameter.

The muscadine is prized for its unique flavor in the making of jams, jellies, and wine. Indians formerly gathered quantities of these wild grapes and dried them to store as future provisions.



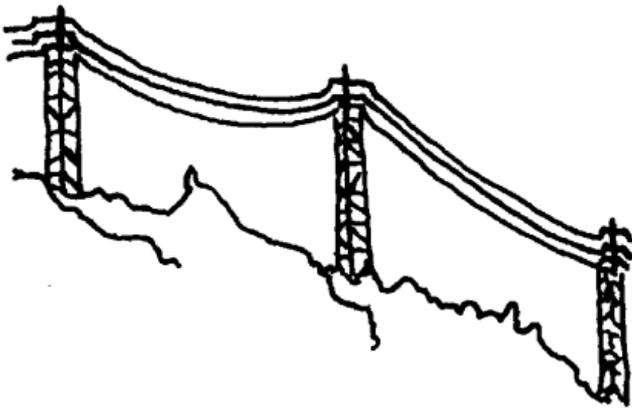
Muscadine
(*Vitis rotundifolia*)



This pipe is an abandoned piezometer. It was used to determine the level of the water table in the soil during the construction of the dam.

POWERLINES

These powerlines carry power marketed by the Southwestern Power Administration in Springfield, Missouri. The power is produced by two hydroelectric generators in the powerhouse at the foot of the dam. Each generator produces 48,000 kilowatts of electricity per hour of operation. The dam harnesses the water's energy and uses it to produce pollution-free electricity. There is no smoke or noise, and the water quality is maintained.



Shortleaf Pine
(*Pinus echinata*)

A discussion of all the fascinating features of this trail would not be complete without mention of the pine, the state tree of Arkansas. Pines have many commercial uses including timber, millwork, plywood, pulp, etc. The family "Pinaceae" also includes spruce, redwood, sequoia, and fir.

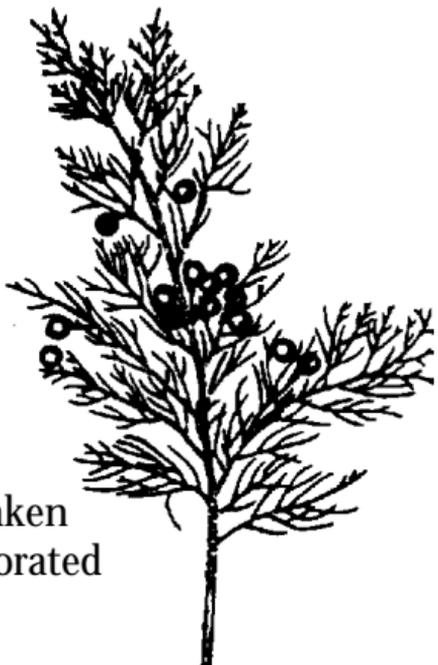
Lichens (*Li kens*)

Have you ever wondered how these plants seem to grow in solid rock?



The flat, thin plants growing on this rock are called lichens. These plants illustrate symbiosis (how two organisms live together and help each other). Lichens are really an alga and a fungus, two plants living as one. The alga produces food while the fungus furnishes a protective, moist habitat. These small plants will help to chemically decompose the rock and turn it into soil. As other plant seeds and spores are deposited onto this new soil, root systems develop and slowly begin to break up the rock's surface. Eventually this rock will become soil. This sequence (several thousand years) of plant activity is known as primary succession. As you walk along this trail, you will notice various stages of succession.

As you look around you, you will notice several Red Cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*). A medium-sized, aromatic, evergreen tree, the Red Cedar has traditionally been taken into homes and decorated as a Christmas Tree.



It is the most widely distributed eastern cone (berry) producing tree. The seeds of the cedar are eaten by many birds and often pass through their digestive tracts. Therefore, the cedar is often found along the flight path of birds. The cedar is an important pioneer in dry, rocky areas.

BALANCED ROCK



At first glance, this large, flat, balancing rock seems to be defying the law of gravity. Actually, it took several thousand years for this formation to be created. Such formations are caused by a process called “weathering.” Over the eons of time, elements such as wind, rain, dust particles, and plants wear away rock to create such formations. Eventually, as this process continues, this balanced rock will slide down the hillside.



CREEK AND THE DOUBLE TREES

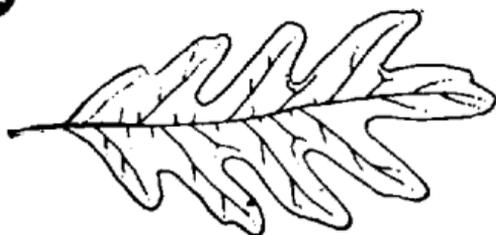
Nature has provided you with a nice peaceful setting. You will notice large rocks dotting the area and forming the bed of a wet weather stream during the spring. This stream attracts many birds and animals in search of a cool drink. See if you can spot any tracks or signs that may have been left behind by any of the birds or animals.



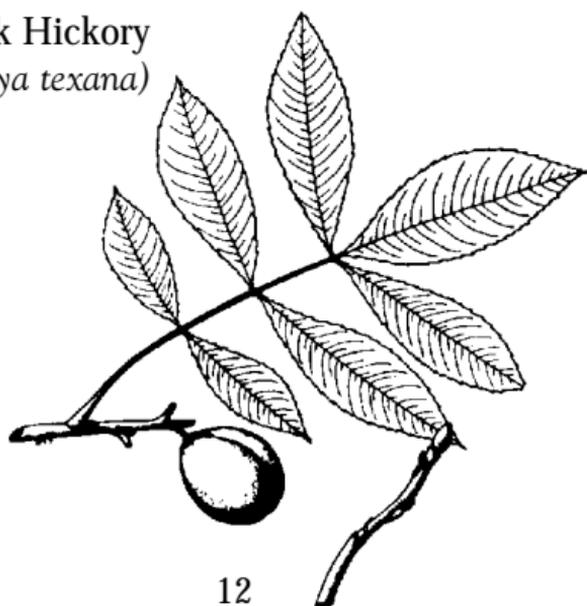
On the left of the bridge you will notice an unusual sight, the double tree. This oddity of nature is not a single forked tree, but rather two different species that somehow fused together during their growth.



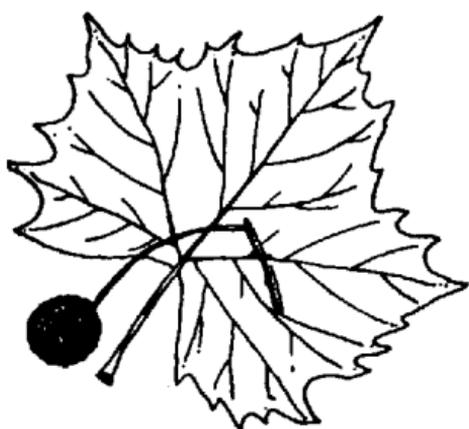
White Oak
(*Quercus alba*)



Black Hickory
(*Carya texana*)



Just ahead, you will notice a junction in the trail. The right fork will take you to the road for a leisurely stroll back to the Visitor Center, the left fork extends for .5 miles to the overlook high above the Little Red River.



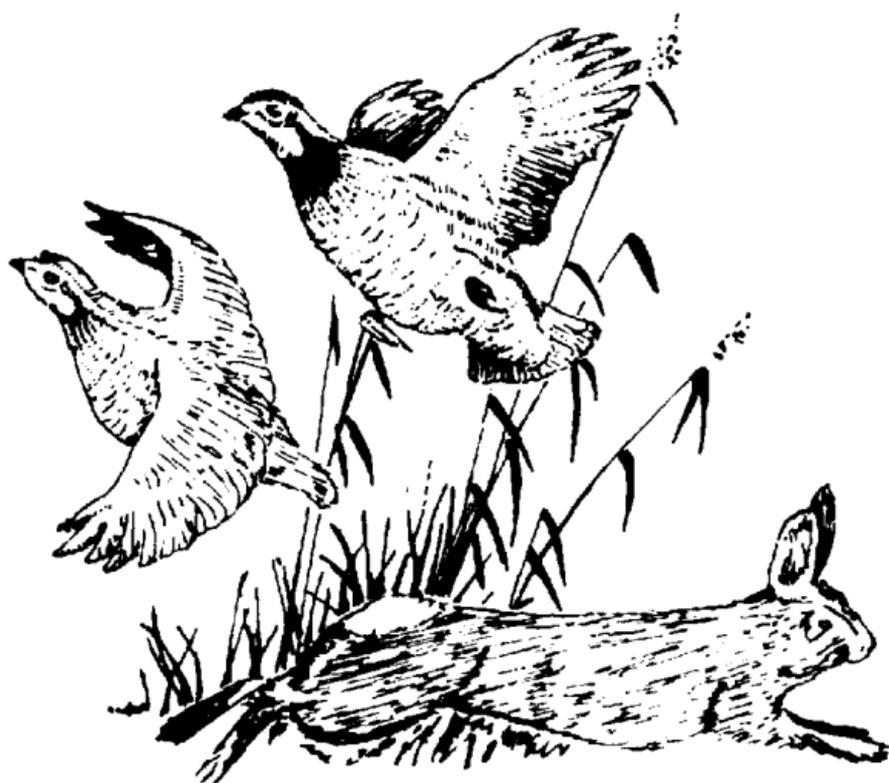
American Sycamore
(*Platanus occidentalis*)

flooring, butchering blocks, pulpwood, fiber board and particle board.

This shaggy barked tree is a giant among trees. No other hardwood attains a greater diameter (up to 15 feet) and few are as tall. It has a large, broad, spreading crown, making it a favored shade tree. The wood is used for

furniture, mill work,

flooring, butchering blocks, pulpwood, fiber board and particle board.





Downy Serviceberry
(*Amelanchier arborea*)

“Sarvis” berry is one of the first trees to be visited by the honeybee during the spring. Usually a small tree, it will average 30 feet in height. It is some times called shadbush

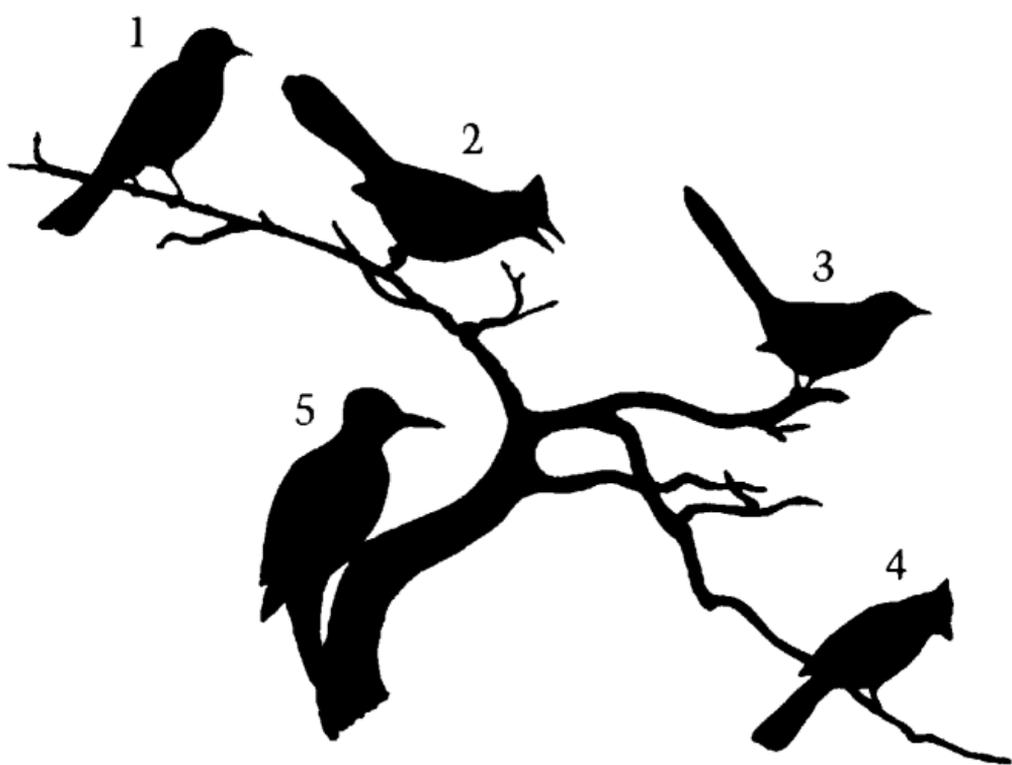
because it flowers at the same time that shad ascend the rivers to spawn. The Serviceberry was a favorite ornamental tree of George Washington and it is still planted for its showy clusters of white flowers.



Sassafras
(*Sassafras albidum*)

Sassafras is one of the first species of trees to invade abandoned agricultural land. Usually a small tree, it can reach heights of over 60 feet in rich moist soils. The bark of the roots was brewed into a spicy tea that was highly regarded as a spring tonic by the early settlers. When the hero in all those old western movies went to the saloon and ordered Sassaaparilla, a version of this non-alcoholic drink is what he was requesting.

Silhouettes of birds commonly
seen on Mossy Bluff Trail.



How many can you identify?

1. Robin
2. Blue Jay
3. Mockingbird
4. Cardinal
5. Red Headed Woodpecker

Flowering Dogwood
(*Cornus Florida*)

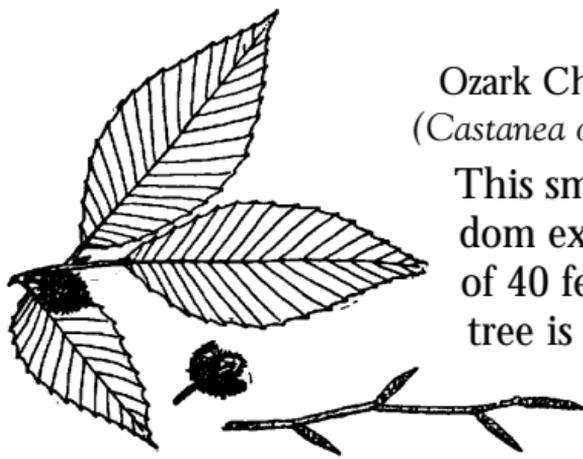


A favorite spring flowering tree, the flowering dogwood is a rather small understory tree which rarely grows over 30 feet high. Its flowers are surrounded by four whitish or pinkish petal-like bracts.

Besides being favored as an ornamental tree, the dogwood has a valued wood. Because of its high resistance to shock, the wood is used for weaving shuttles, spools, pulleys, mallet heads, and jeweler's boxes. American Indians and early settlers used the bark as a remedy in situations where quinine would be prescribed in later years. The small berry-like fruit is a favorite food for deer, turkeys, squirrels, and numerous songbirds.

THE LEGEND OF THE DOGWOOD

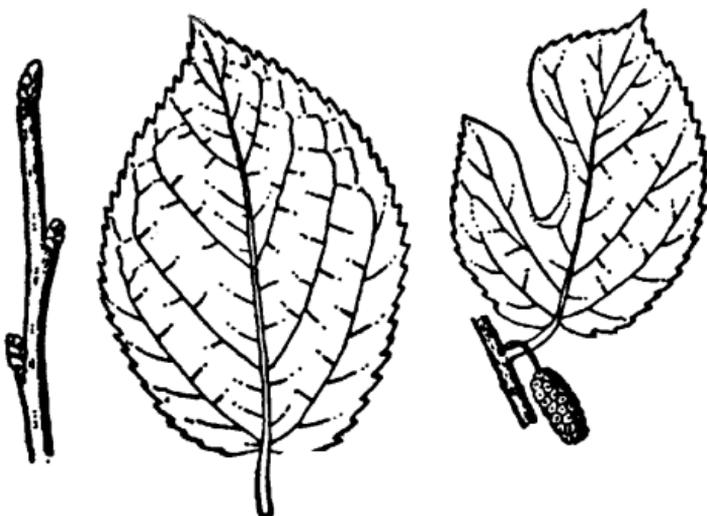
There is a legend that, at the time of the Crucifixion, the dogwood was the size of the oak and other forest trees. So firm and strong was the tree that it was chosen as the timber of the cross. To be used thus for such a cruel purpose greatly distressed the tree. Jesus, nailed upon it, sensed this, and, in His gentle pity for all sorrow and suffering, said to it: "Because of your regret and pity for My suffering, never again shall the dogwood tree grow large enough to be used as a cross. Henceforth it shall be slender and bent and twisted and its blossoms shall be in the form of a cross . . . two long and two short petals. And in the center of the outer edge of each petal there will be nail prints, brown with rust and stained with red and in the center of the flower will be a crown of thorns, and all who see it will remember."



Ozark Chinkapin
(*Castanea ozarkensis*)

This small tree seldom exceeds a height of 40 feet. This rare tree is the only tree species with a natural range limited

to the Ozark region. It is sometimes called Ozark Chestnut. Related to the American Chestnut, it bears similar but smaller edible chestnuts or chinkapins. These trees are attacked by a fungus parasite called chestnut blight and are therefore threatened with extinction.



Red Mulberry
(*Morus rubra*)

A common tree, the red mulberry is found in every part of Arkansas. This small to medium-sized tree rarely gets taller than 50 feet. The wood is of little commercial value, but is used locally for fence posts and agricultural implements. The berries are edible and consumed by mammals, birds, and people. The Choctaw Indians wove cloaks from the fibrous inner bark of young mulberry shoots.

WEEPING ROCKS



During the spring and often after a heavy rain, the face of this bluff is covered with tiny waterfalls, giving it a weeping appearance. As the soil above the bluff becomes saturated, groundwater seeps downward into cracks and fissures which lead to openings in the face of the bluff.

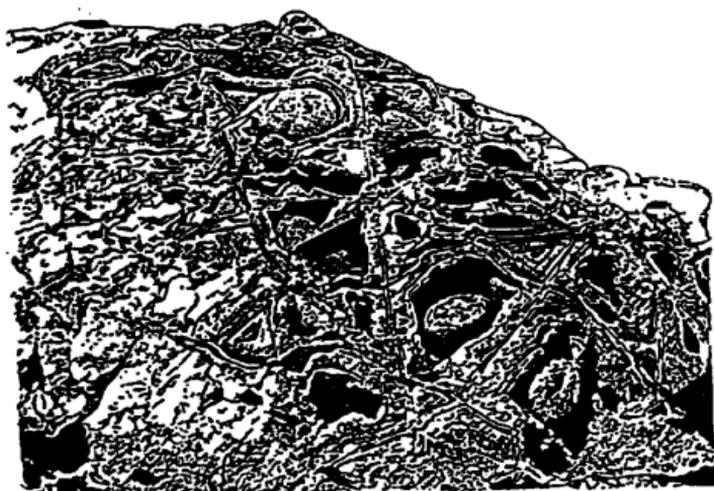
FERNS — “LIVING FOSSILS”



For over 400 million years ferns have been growing on this planet in much the same form as you see here.

Ferns are extremely slow growing, requiring up to 18 years to reach maturity. They reproduce by spores rather than by seeds, and only a few of the thousands of spores released from the underside of the leaves ever survive to produce another plant.

TURTLE BACK ROCK



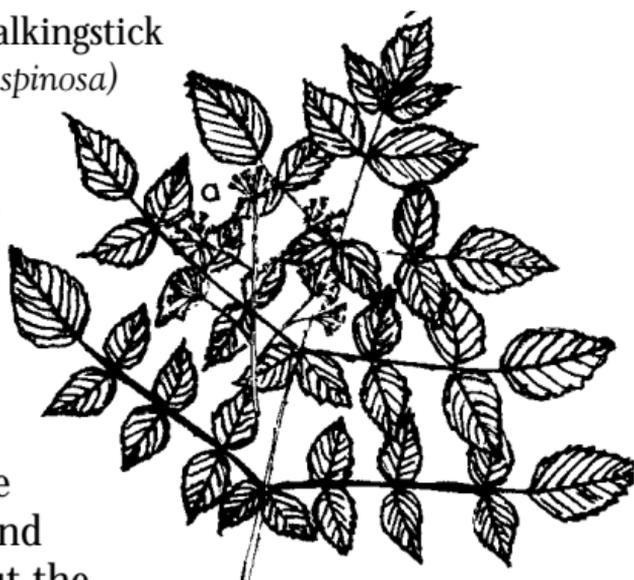
This boxwork pattern is described by geologists by several names such as spheroidal and zonal. It can occur in many types of sedimentary rocks which have high humidity environments during their geologic era. The rock patterns are composed of ancient sediment deposits of different hardness. When the uplifting occurred that formed these mountains water percolated through joints and fissures of the rock strata. This enabled the softer oxides in the rock pattern to be removed, leaving the harder, surrounding material resulting in the pattern observed today.

OVERLOOK

Greers Ferry Dam was built to provide flood control and hydroelectric power. In addition to also being a water supply reservoir, the lake is one of the United States' most popular recreation areas.

The construction of the dam, with cold water release into the Little Red River, replaced the warm water spawning grounds of the Little Red with a cold water environment. To replace the warm water fish, which migrated downstream, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates a trout hatchery downstream of the dam for stocking the lake and river.

Devil's Walkingstick
(*Aralia spinosa*)



This spiny little tree is found throughout the southeast and can be either a small tree or a thicket-forming shrub. It was occasionally planted during the Victorian era as a grotesque ornamental tree. The aromatic spicy roots and fruit were used by the early settlers in home remedies, including a cure for toothaches.

TRAIL'S END

Even though the trail back to the Visitor Center extends for another one half mile, this brings you to the end of our brochure. We hope you have enjoyed the trail. Please tell others, so that they may enjoy it also.





BUCKEYE TRAIL

The 660-foot long Buckeye Trail was constructed in conjunction with the Mossy Bluff Trail to provide a quality trail experience for persons who are not physically able to negotiate the more difficult areas. The trail is accessible to wheelchairs and its smooth, level surface is easy to walk. Picnic tables enable those who use this trail to enjoy a meal under the forest canopy. Two vista points provide lofty views of the area downstream of the dam. For the seeing impaired, a large print guide and a braille guide are available at the Visitor Center.

There are three National Nature Trails at the Greers Ferry Lake project. We invite you to return often to Mossy Bluff, Buckeye and Sugar Loaf Trails.

VISITOR CENTER

Mossy Bluff and Buckeye Trails are located next to the William Carl Garner Visitor Center and the Greers Ferry Lake Project Office. The Visitor Center features a 20-minute video program, "The Saga of the Little Red: A Tale of Two Centuries," and an exhibit area. Information services and restrooms also are available.

