

Homewood Forest Preserve

(Home of the Spotted Salamander)

Directions:

From highway 280W turn left, heading east, on Lakeshore drive. Go 1.1 miles. Turn left on Edgeway Drive (first left after hwy 31). Go 0.1 miles passing the National Guard Armory on the right. Go right on South Lakeshore Drive toward Homewood High School. The Preserve is on the left opposite the athletic fields. Go .4 miles. Park and meet in the first lot on your right, the lower parking lot of Homewood High School.

<http://maps.google.com/maps?ll=33.462611,-86.786075&z=16&t=h&hl=en>

History:

The area was called the Howard College Natural area from the late 50's until Homewood High School was built sometime in 70's. The channel of Shades Creek was straightened. Lakeshore drive is on the north side and Old Lakeshore Drive is along the south side. Samford University owned the land. The city of Homewood acquired it from Samford. The Freshwater Land Trust is finalizing a conservation easement which guarantees the land cannot be developed and will be available for public use in perpetuity.

Three Main Types of Forest:

Dry Upland Forest
Steep Sloped Forest
Moist Riparian Forest

Wetlands are not usually wet but when they are wet, the area can be inundated for many days. They are wet several times a year.

Clues to identify a wetland:

1. little vegetation. Trees cannot get established due to wet periods.
2. mottled soil. A core sample at the Homewood Forest Preserve has a gray color which is due to the lack of oxygen during the soil development. Iron stays in the solid or ferrous form. The oxidized or ferric form develops during dry (oxygen available) times of the year.
3. test of clay. Roll the core sample between your palms and it forms a coherent worm shape.

Critters:

Salamanders (unlike lizards, salamander legs emerge out to the side so their bellies drag the ground)

Spotted salamander (studied by Ken Marion at UAB. species can live 25 yrs)

Red-backed salamander (studied by Megan Gibbens, BSC)

Dusky salamander in the brook

Spring salamander

Two-lined salamander

Spiders:

Funnel

Trapdoor (tarantula group, live up to 20 yr., 5 spp in AL) - door faces upslope

Snails:

Land snail (white tooth at opening in shell)

Beetles:

Bess bugs (*Popilus disjunctus*, a monotypic genus) are black beetles that are major degraders of rotting wood

Silver-spotted skipper uses kudzu as host plant. it cuts and rolls rolls inside a piece of the leaf.

Birds:

holes from yellow-bellied sapsucker

Plants:

Trees:

Acer negundo (box elder)

Acer rubrum (red maple)

Aesculus pavia (red buckeye)

Carpinus caroliniana (musclewood, ironwood) - lower slope

Carya glabra (pignut hickory) - glabrous leaves, nut pear-shaped, husk slow to split

Carya ovata (shagbark hickory)

Carya tomentosa (mockernut hickory) stout twig & terminal bud, hairy leaves, thick husk

Celtis occidentalis (hackberry)

Crataegus marshalli (parsley haw)

Fagus grandifolia (american beech)

Liquidambar styraciflua (sweetgum) - spring leaves have turpentine smell, can clean teeth with petiole

Liriodendron tulipifera (tulip poplar)

Morus rubra (mulberry)

Nyssa sylvatica (black gum)

Ostrya virginiana (eastern hophornbeam) - midslope

Oxydendron arboreum (sourwood)

Pinus virginiana (virginia pine) short twisted needles

Quercus alba (white oak) in white oak group, no bristle tips, acorns mature 1st season

Quercus prinus (chestnut oak) white oak group

Quercus velutina (black oak) red oak group, bristle tips on leaves, acorns mature 2nd season, upland slope

Tilia americana (basswood)

Ulmus alata (winged elm)

Ulmus rubra (slippery elm)

Shrubs:

Euonymus americana (hearts a'bustin')

Hammamelis virginiana (witchhazel)

Hydrangea arborescens (wild hydrangea)

Hydrangea quercifolia (oakleaf hydrangea)

Rhododendron canescens (piedmont azalea)
Vaccinium arboreum (treeform blueberry, sparkleberry)

Vines:

Aristolochia durior? (dutchman's pipe) along road
Bignonia capreolata (crossvine)
Smilax spp.
Vitis sp.

Forbs:

Ageratina aromatica (small-leaved black snakeroot)
Ambrosia trifida (giant ragweed)
Collinsonia sp. ? (horsebalm)
Dioscorea villosa (wild yam) - 1950's corticosteroides developed on a Mexican yam
Epifagus virginiana (beechdrops)
Erythronium sp. (troutlily)
Hepatica acutiloba (sharp-lobed hepatica)
Phytolacca americana (pokeweed)
Ruellia sp. (wild petunia)
Saururus cernuus (lizard's tail)
Solidago caesia (blue-stemmed goldenrod)
Solidago sp. (clasping, perhaps perfoliate leaf; variable leaf shapes, some have elongated, narrowed base)
Stellaria pubera (star chickweed)
Viola sp. (purple violet)

Ferns:

Pleopeltis polypodioides (resurrection fern)
Polystichum acrostichoides (christmas fern)

Grasses:

Arundinaria tecta (bamboo)
Chasmantheum sessiflorum (longleaf woodoats)
Danthonia sp. spicata? (poverty grass)