

Homestead Trail

The Homestead Trail runs parallel with the eastern edge of Kingfisher Pond, connecting with the Kingfisher Pond Trail on the northern end. It is an easy hike with a beautiful view of both the forest and the pond. The trail is just over a quarter of a mile and is a great trail for beginners and small children.

Some seasonal plants and migratory wildlife mentioned in this self-guided brochure may be scarce from December through February.



We certainly hope that you enjoy your tour of our Homestead Pond Trail. Please return this guide to the Admissions Desk.

We look forward to your next visit!
www.chattnaturecenter.org
(770) 992-2055

5. Take a Hike!

You may be familiar with the organisms around you, but you're invited to explore a new world, a micro-world! And how do you get there? A micro-hike, of course! Mark off a small area in the forest floor. Keeping your eyes no more than 12 inches from the ground, see what kinds of things call this micro-world home. You may see plants, insects, fungus and more! Observe this tiny world for awhile; imagine what life might be like on or under the ground.

6. Leaves of three...

...let it be! Have you heard this phrase before? It describes poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), a three-leaved



plant that produces an oil that up to 85% of people are allergic to. You could get a rash from poison ivy by touching the leaves, its hairy-looking vine, roots, or from touching something that has come in contact with poison ivy, such as garden tools or pets. Although it gives most people an itchy rash, it is an important food source for wildlife. Many birds and small mammals rely on the bright red berries that poison ivy produces in the late summer. So, what is the best defense against this itch-producing plant? Learn to recognize it and leave it alone.



Homestead Trail

a self-guided tour

Please respect nature as you hike on the Homestead Trail; take only pictures and leave only footprints. **To enjoy this trail, please follow the orange blazes (a spot/mark on a tree) that can be found along the trail. Numbers are marked with orange paint on stones.**



Virginia Opossum
Didelphus virginiana

1. Is It Alive?

Did you notice the dead trees and logs throughout the forest? Stop and take a closer look. What kind of life do you see in this dead tree? Mushrooms or other forms of fungus may be growing there. Fungus thrives on the surface of a damp forest and is always present underground. The mushrooms we see above ground are considered the flowers and fruits of the fungus. The forest needs fungus to form soil, decay wood, and enhance plant growth.

Dead trees provide food and shelter for another vital group of living things, insects. Tiny holes in dead trees are signs of insect life and piles of sawdust show who is home, termites, ants and beetles, just to name a few. One large dead tree could be thought of as an insect hotel.

Thanks to fungus and insects, the forest is constantly being renewed.

2. Who Lives Here? (Spring and Summer)

Keep your eyes open for a variety of species that call this transition area home. Plants and animals you may find here include:



Flowering Dogwood
Cornus florida



Heartleaf Ginger
Hexastylis arifolia



American Beech
Fagus grandifolia

2. Who Lives Here? (Spring and Summer) cont'd.

Keep your eyes open for a variety of species that call this transition area home. Plants and animals you may find here include:



Carolina Mantis
Stagmomantis carolina



Five-Lined & Broadhead Skink
Eumeces sp.



Carolina Wren
Thryothorus ludovicianus

3. The Mysterious Tree Bark

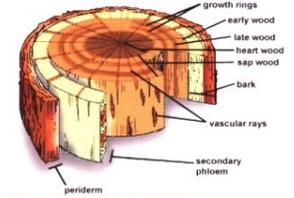
Sometimes it is helpful to feel your way along the trail. Being careful not to touch thorny or hairy-textured vines, compare the types of bark you feel on each tree along the way. Remember that the bark on a tree is like its outer, protective skin. As the tree grows, the outermost layer of bark dies and naturally sloughs off—a lot like our skin. Bark also has several functions to perform. Just inside the bark are special layers that move nutrients and water which help the tree to grow.



You can take home a souvenir from nature by taking a blank piece of paper and placing it on the trunk of the tree. Take a crayon (with the paper off) and rub on the paper (length-wise) for your very own bark rubbing!

3. The Mysterious Tree Bark, cont'd.

Xylem carries water and minerals from the roots to the leaves and *Phloem* carries manufactured food (sugars) from the leaves to the roots.



Both of these help to form the *cambium*, the living “woody” part of the tree. Every year, new layers of cambium are added to the tree which causes the trunk to grow larger.

4. I Remember When...

The Homestead Trail gets its name from the remnants of an old cabin that is located on the trail. Dating back to the 1940s, all that remains of this old house is the chimney and the concrete drive. The cabin and surrounding property was owned by Robert Wade, the owner of a car dealership in Atlanta, who used the cabin as a retreat to escape the city. Mr. Wade was not the first human to decide this would be a fine place to live. Five-hundred years ago the Cherokee Nation inhabited the land north of the Chattahoochee River. The Cherokee settled in this area, building permanent homes because the surroundings supplied the resources they needed to survive, food, water, shelter, clothing and medicines. It wasn't until the 1700s that the European settlers began to inhabit this area.

