

1. Just the Beginning...

This self-guided nature trail is just one way that park visitors can enjoy Greenwood Park. Almost 6 miles of additional trails wind through wooded habitat at Greenwood, offering opportunities for a short stroll, a lengthy hike, or anything in between. Quiet and observant trail-walkers may be rewarded with glimpses of some of the plentiful wildlife that inhabits the park. In spring and summer, dozens of species of wildflowers display their colors along the network of trails.

Complementing Greenwood Park's beautiful and secluded trail system are a variety of other opportunities including picnicking, camping, swimming, fishing, boating, and cross-country skiing, to name a few.

2. Red Pine Plantation

The plantation of red pines bordering the trail was established before this property became a park. Red pine can be recognized by its reddish-brown, scaly bark, and long needles that grow in pairs. Older needles, shed by the trees, cover the ground like a carpet. This fast-growing tree species is valued for its wood. As a forest tree, it provides cool shade, shelter for animals, and cones laden with seeds.

3. Red Oak

Oak leaves turn brown in the fall, and may remain on the tree all winter long. The leaves of the red oak are bordered by pointy lobes (in contrast with the rounded lobes of the white oaks). Red oak bark starts out smooth but gradually develops long, flat-topped ridges that run up and down the trunk. The heavy, hard, strong wood is valued for furniture, interior finish, and general construction.

The acorns of the red oak are an important source of food for numerous woodland creatures, though the less bitter acorn of the white oak is preferred.

4. The End of a Life...

This hollowed-out fallen tree may have been the victim of high winds. The center "heartwood" of a tree contains no living tissue, so a tree whose heartwood has rotted away may continue to live and grow. However, since the heartwood provides strength and durability to the tree, a hollow tree may break more readily in heavy winds. A tree may also fall if the soil around its roots has been worn away, possibly by flowing water.

Though it will, over time, decompose, this tree meanwhile provides shelter for small woodland animals, as well as an interesting sight to see.

5. Bigtooth Aspen

Aspen trees can be recognized by the roundish leaves, pointed on one end. Bigtooth aspen leaves are jagged, or "toothed" along their edges; other aspens (or "poplars") have smaller, less noticeable teeth along their edges. Younger aspen trees have smooth, greenish bark, which gradually turns brown and grooved as the tree ages. You can see this difference if you compare the lower (older) bark to the upper (younger) bark.

Aspens are fast-growing trees that can provide a relatively quick cover in areas that have been burnt-over or clear cut. The growing aspen trees provide a sheltered area that can allow for the growth of seedlings of some of the slower-growing tree species.

6. The Decomposers

As trees die and fall to the forest floor, it is the job of decomposers like bacteria and fungi to break them down and return them to the soil. Living trees absorb nutrients from the soil as they grow; without the decomposers, the nutrients would quickly be depleted from the soil. Decomposers allow the nutrients to return to the soil to be used again.

As you look around in the woods, you'll see fallen trees undergoing decomposition.

Fungal spores falling on the wood develop into the characteristic mushroom shape or other shape, depending upon the species of fungus. Chemicals are released, which break down the wood into a liquid form, which can be absorbed by the fungus. When the wood has become soft and moist, plants such as mosses and ferns will begin to grow on the wood, encouraging further decomposition. The soft, moist wood becomes a perfect home for many kinds of insects as well, speeding up the decay process by burrowing and chewing through the wood.

7. Club Moss

Look down for small, sturdy-looking, dark-green plants with tiny leaves, members of the club moss family. At any time of the year, these evergreen plants can be found in moist, shady woodlands. Like all club mosses, this species reproduces through tiny, dust-like spores, which may require up to 20 years to develop into the plant. The stems of club moss run along or just under the ground. As the stems, or "rootstocks," spread, small colonies of plants form.

Once collected extensively for use in holiday decorations, it has become increasingly hard to find. Now, all members of this family are protected by law.

8. The Eastern Hemlock

The Eastern Hemlock is a common evergreen tree widely distributed throughout Broome County. The characteristic short, flat needles are shiny, dark green on top, with two thin white lines on the underside.

Found thriving in cool, moist forests, hemlocks were long ignored for lumber, but their inner bark, rich in tannin, proved to be an important resource to the tanning industry in Canada and the northeastern United States. Today hemlock wood is used for coarse construction lumber and wood pulp. Birds and small mammals make use of this tree, seeking shelter within its dense foliage, and food from its tiny cones.

9. A Change in Habitat

As the Pathfinder Trail meets the Creek Trail, the habitat changes fairly suddenly. This area is cooler, more open, and sunnier. Grass and other small "understory" plants that require more light can grow here. Tracks of deer reveal that these animals visit the area, perhaps for food or for a drink from the nearby creek for which the trail is named.

10. Lichens

"Symbiosis" is a kind of partnership between two kinds of living things. Each provides something which the other needs, allowing each to survive where it might not survive alone. All around, you can find pale, greenish-gray lichens growing on the bark of the trees, resembling a crusty coat of paint. Lichens are a partnership between a fungus and algae, a kind of plant usually found growing in water. Fungus cannot produce its own food, and so the algae produces food for them both. The fungus, in turn, covers the algae and prevents it from drying out. Growing together in the form of a lichen, this symbiotic partnership can grow on dry tree trunks, on stones, or on dry, barren soil, places where most plants could not survive.

11. Black Cherry

The black cherry tree is easily recognized by the dark, flaking bark, which resembles "black potato chips." Highly valued for their lumber, very few black cherry trees reach their potential height of 80 feet. Smaller ones, however, can be found growing along country roads, in abandoned pastures, and on rocky hillsides. The small, sweet fruit of black cherries provides food for many kinds of birds, and is a favorite of raccoons and other woodland mammals. Mice consume many of the pit-like seeds of the black cherry. Look along both sides of the trail for several of these beautiful, valuable trees.

Broome County
Parks & Recreation

GREENWOOD PARK

NATURE TRAIL GUIDE



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Visit our website at
www.gobroomecounty.com

About Greenwood Park

Greenwood is the county's first and most complete park. The campground is well maintained and offers a wide range of facilities and opportunities that help give the entire family a quality camping experience. The lake is stocked with trout and its spring-fed waters maintain refreshing water all summer long. A variety of boats are available for rent. Fully equipped beach and picnic areas are contrasted with self-guiding trails. A special campground for organized youth groups is located on the northwest side of the lake. Groomed cross-country ski trails and equipment rentals complete this year-round park.

To reserve a picnic shelter or to make a camping reservation, call Broome County Department of Parks and Recreation's main office at (607) 778-2193.

Greenwood Park Security
(607) 862-9933

For Emergency Help Call
911.

Where is Greenwood Park?

Greenwood Park is located at 153 Greenwood Road in the Town of Nanticoke, New York. From Binghamton take Route 17 to Exit 71N (Airport Road), then take Airport Road north and follow park signs. From Endicott take Route 26N and follow park signs.

How to Use This Guide

Follow the numbered trail markers on the nature trail indicated by the broken line on the map. The trail markers correspond to the numbered paragraphs in this guide.

COMBINED TRAIL SYSTEM IS
APPROXIMATELY 6.5 MILES

How You Can Help

1. Please stay on the trails maintained for your safety.
2. Use litter baskets placed throughout the park for your convenience.
3. Report damage of bridges, trails, and trail posts to the Park Manager or Security.
4. Be considerate to other park visitors and wildlife. Walk quietly, and you will see more!
5. Place trail booklets in the trail register at the end of the trail or keep a copy for your own reference.

NOTE: All plants and animals in Broome County Parks are protected by law and should not be removed or harmed in any way.

Many of the animals you might catch a glimpse of on the trails are on display at Broome County Parks and Recreation's Finch Hollow Nature Center. Located on Oakdale Road in Johnson City, the Nature Center houses a collection of over 300 mounted birds and animals, many by the late Lee J. Loomis, well-known taxidermist. For more information, call (607) 729-4231.

GREENWOOD PARK NATURE TRAIL

