



madison
AUDUBON



FIELD GUIDE *for* KIDS



MAMMALS | INSECTS | HERPS | PLANTS

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Madison Audubon Field Guide for Kids was created to further Madison Audubon's mission to protect and improve habitat for birds and other wildlife through land acquisition and management, education, and advocacy. It serves as a companion guide to our popular **Bird Guide for Kids** and provides a simple introduction to some of the most common animals and plants southern Wisconsin students might see in their schoolyards, neighborhoods, and backyards.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains sections for **Mammals**, **Insects**, **Herps**, and **Plants**. Each page will give a description of the animal or plant, a photo to help you identify it, and some facts about where to find it, what it eats, and how it behaves.

Look for the color and symbol of each animal group along the side of the page as you flip through your field guide.

MAMMALS



Begin on page 4

INSECTS



Begin on page 11

HERPS



Begin on page 17

PLANTS



Begin on page 25

Fun Fact: Look here for a tidbit about the animal or plant that will help you remember it!

MAMMALS



Mammals are a category of animal (which includes humans!) that have certain features. They are **warm-blooded**, meaning they can create body heat and cool themselves down. They are **vertebrates**, meaning they will have a backbone. They will also have **hair or fur** on their bodies. The mothers will give birth to **live young** (not eggs) and will feed their young **milk** when they are little.

Look for these symbols as you read about the mammals in this guide:



Where will you find this mammal? What type of habitat does it prefer?



Where does this mammal live? What type of nest, den, or burrow does it make? When does it have young? Does this mammal hibernate?



What types of food does this mammal eat?



What behaviors does this mammal have? How does it communicate? What might you see it doing?

*Tracks are shown for each mammal. F stands for **front** track and H stands for **hind** track. Tracks are not to scale.*

Fun Fact: Wisconsin is home to roughly 70 different types of mammal species!

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL

A rodent with gray fur on its back and white fur on its throat and belly, with a long bushy gray tail. Some squirrels may have more reddish-brown coloring instead of gray.



C. Watts / CC BY



Woodlands and forests with lots of trees. Very common in parks and backyards where they may try to eat food from bird feeders.



Builds nest of dry leaves and twigs, or nests in hollow tree dens. Does not hibernate. Will often have two litters of young, once in early spring and again in later summer.



Seeds, acorns, and nuts, but also tree bark, tree buds, berries, insects, or frogs. Make take veggies from gardens.



Will store food in several different locations to eat later. Communicates using tail flicking and “chatter”-like vocalizations.

Fun Fact: The eastern gray squirrel is one of the few mammals that can descend a tree head-first!

EASTERN CHIPMUNK

A small, striped rodent with reddish-brown fur and contrasting dark and light brown stripes, with a dark tail.



Jared Kennedy / CC BY



Woodland, forested areas as well as urban parks and backyards. Likes areas with lots of shrubs and brush where it can hide from predators.



Builds a burrow in the ground that can be more than 11 feet long, with multiple entrances. Will have two litters of young, one early in spring and another in summer.



Seeds, nuts, fruits, and buds, but also may eat fungi, insects, worms, and frogs. Mostly eats on the ground, but will climb trees to get acorns.



Uses cheek pouches to carry large amounts of food back to the burrow to stockpile for the winter. Often very chatty with several bird-like calls and high-pitched squeaks.

Fun Fact: When constructing its elaborate burrow, a chipmunk will use its cheek pouch to carry dirt away from the tunnels.

EASTERN COTTONTAIL

Red-brown or gray-brown rabbit with a round, egg-shaped body and white stubby tail. Ears are longer than they are wide, designed to detect predators by sound. Wide-set eyes allow it to see in multiple directions in search of predators.



USFWS / Public domain



Can be found in lots of habitats, like meadows, woodlands, farms, and urban areas like parks and backyards.



Nests with groups of other rabbits in burrows left behind by other animals. May have several litters each year. Does not hibernate.



A herbivorous diet of grasses, leafy weeds, and flowering plants.



Very social among other rabbits, so may be seen in groups. Often seen grazing. May freeze in place if detecting a threat.

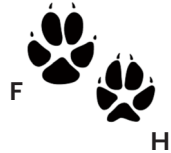
Fun Fact: Rabbits will run away from predators using a zig-zag pattern to confuse them. They can run up to 18 miles per hour!

RED FOX

A medium-sized fox with reddish-brown fur. Long-bodied with a long snout, short limbs with dark or black paws, and a fluffy tail that is longer than half its body length.



Nora Feddal / CC BY-SA



Forests, prairies, agricultural fields, and urban areas. Prefers “edge” habitats where there is a mix of vegetation.



Nests in burrows, often called dens, dug into the side of a hill or steep bank. Does not hibernate. Young foxes (kits) are usually born in March or April.



Small rodents like voles and mice, but sometimes eats large rabbits, reptiles, or fruits and vegetables from gardens.



Mostly nocturnal, but can be out during the day. Stalks its prey and uses powerful sense of hearing to listen for animals underground.

Fun Fact: Red foxes are extremely agile. They are good swimmers and can jump up to six feet high!

RACCOON

Medium-sized mammal with gray and black fur, a gray bushy tail with alternating white and black rings, and a black mask across its eyes.



mbarrison / CC BY-SA



Prefer wooded areas with easy access to water nearby, and avoids open areas. Also found in urban areas with lots of trees.



Nests in tree hollows, spaces between large rocks, or burrows made by other animals. Does not hibernate, but is less active in winter. Young raccoons (kits) are born in April or May.



Eats a wide variety of food, ranging from insects and worms, to fruits and nuts, to fish and bird eggs.



Nocturnal and most active at night. Will use their paws and long, sensitive fingers to examine food, removing bits they don't want to eat.

Fun Fact: Raccoons are very smart problem-solvers, using their super sensitive paws to open compost and garbage bins and pull out what they want.

WHITE-TAILED DEER

Large mammal with hooved feet. Has a reddish-brown coat during spring and summer and a gray-brown coat in fall and winter, with a white underside to its tail. Males, called bucks, have antlers that they shed and regrow every year. Young deer, called fawns, have white spots.



Larry Smith / CC BY



USFWS Mountain Prairie / CC BY



Found in many habitats like forests, prairies, and agricultural fields, but prefer wooded areas with lots of cover.



Will find a comfortable place to bed down at night, such as under low-hanging evergreen branches. Does not hibernate. Will give birth to fawns from April to June.



Plants, grasses, acorns, fruit, corn, and mushrooms. May occasionally eat small mammals like field mice.



Strong sense of smell and hearing to detect predators. Will run away in a leaping, bounding fashion with its white tail raised in warning.

Fun Fact: A female deer, or doe, will leave a young fawn in a safe place while she forages for food. If you see a fawn curled up all by itself, don't worry! Its mom is nearby and will be back.

INSECTS



Insects are the largest category of animal. They have **six legs, wings**, and an **exoskeleton**. Insects begin life as **eggs** before they go through a process called **metamorphosis**, during which they grow into their final form. Their bodies are divided into three parts: the **head** has an insect's mouth, eyes, and antennae, the **thorax** has its six legs and wings, and the **abdomen** contains organs that help them process food and reproduce.

Look for these symbols as you read about the insects in this guide:



Where will you find this insect? What type of habitat does it prefer?



What is this insect's life cycle? How is it born? What stages might it go through during metamorphosis?



What types of food does this insect eat?



What behaviors does this insect have? How does it communicate? What might you see it doing?

Fun Fact: Insects are very common, numerous, and diverse! About 90% of all life of Earth is made up of insects, and more are discovered each year.

BUMBLE BEE

Fuzzy, flying insect with round body covered in yellow, black, white, and/or orange hairs. Their head has two antennae and a long tongue called a proboscis to gather nectar (a sugary liquid) and pollen. Females have a straight stinger, which they rarely use only to defend themselves.



MateX37 / CC BY-SA

INSECT



Prairies, woodlands, orchards, gardens and anywhere there are flowering plants.



Eggs are laid by a queen bee on a ball of pollen and wax. Hatched larva spin cocoons where they grow into adult bees.



Nectar and pollen. Will carry pollen on their legs as they gather nectar, which feeds young bees back at the hive.



Social creatures that live together in small colonies. The queen lays eggs, female worker bees forage and maintain the nest. Male bees are only needed for mating.

Fun Fact: There are over 250 different species of bumble bees in the world! Their fuzzy bodies and need to collect pollen make them some of the best pollinators.

HONEY BEE

Buzzing, flying insect with a stocky oval-shaped body and dark golden-yellow and brown bands. Smaller, darker, and less fuzzy than bumble bees. Females have a barbed stinger, which they use to protect themselves and their hive. They are not native to North America but are very common.



MateX97 / CC BY-SA

INSECT



Prairies, woodlands, orchards, gardens, any place with flowering plants. May live in domesticated environments, like boxes managed by beekeepers.



Eggs laid by a queen bee hatch into larva. After feeding, larva will form a cocoon inside wax “brood cells” within the hive. They emerge from the cells as adult bees.



Feeds on nectar and pollen from flowering plants and fruit trees. Nectar fuels their activity and pollen provides protein.



Live socially in very large, complex colonies. Queens lay eggs, females forage and maintain the nest, and males will mate with the queen.

Fun Fact: Honey bees will do a “bee dance” or “waggle dance” to communicate with other bees about where to find flowers and water.

MONARCH

Begins life as a caterpillar that has black, yellow, and white stripes with two black antennae. Will spin a protective case around themselves called a chrysalis, where they make the transformation into a large butterfly with orange wings that have black borders and veins. Wings have white spots along the black border.

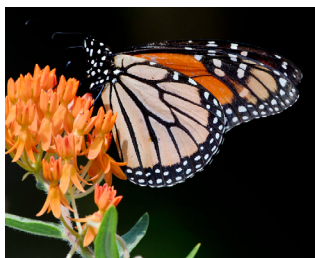
INSECT



Patty O'Hearn Kickham / CC BY



Sid Mosdell / CC BY



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Open areas like meadows, prairies, marshes, local parks and gardens.



Eggs laid on milkweed leaves will hatch into caterpillars. After 2 weeks, caterpillars will form a chrysalis to transform into a butterfly.



Monarch caterpillars only eat milkweed. As butterflies, monarchs feed on nectar from a variety of flowers, including milkweed.



Monarchs spend most of their time eating. In the late summer and fall, monarchs migrate over 3,000 miles from Canada to Mexico to hibernate for the winter.

Fun Fact: The milkweed that monarchs eat contains a poison that predators don't like. Predators avoid eating monarch butterflies because they taste gross from the milkweed!

GRASSHOPPER

A ground-dwelling insect that may be green, brown, or gray, with an elongated body. Has two pairs of short front legs and two powerful hind legs that enable it to jump high and far. Its mouth has small pincers used to tear off food from plants.



Public domain



Open, dry areas with lots of short plants and grasses, like meadows prairies, and agricultural fields.



Hatch from eggs appearing like an adult grasshopper, but smaller and without wings. As they grow, will shed its skin 5 or 6 times until it reaches its adult form and gains wings.



Plant leaves, grasses, flower stems, and seeds. Will also eat agricultural crops.



Active during day and night. Male grasshoppers vibrate their wings or rub their wings and legs together to make noises that attract females.

Fun Fact: There are over 11,000 known species of grasshoppers. They are among the oldest of the insects, first recorded over 250 million years ago.

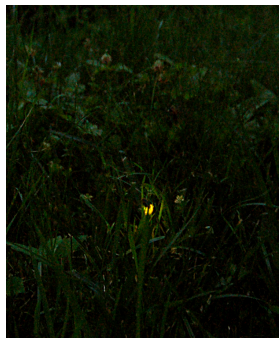


FIREFLY

A small, thin flying insect in the beetle family with a flat, dark brown or black body that is edged with orange or yellow. Known for their bioluminescence, a chemical reaction that occurs in their abdomen, which allows their body to glow or flash with a yellow light.



Art Farmer / CC BY-SA



Joanna Poe / CC BY-SA



Marshes and woodlands, but also can be found in gardens and yards. Prefer areas near water where larva will have lots of food.



Eggs are laid on the ground. Larva feed on the ground, then burrow into the ground to hibernate over winter. They emerge in spring and take their adult form.



Pollen and nectar as an adult. In larva stage, will eat small worms, slugs, and other small soft-bodied insects.



Fireflies are nocturnal (active at night) and use bioluminescence to ward off prey or attract mates.

Fun Fact: Different species of fireflies will have different “flash patterns” and blink their lights in different ways.



HERPS

“Herps” is short for “herptile,” a term that refers to both reptiles and amphibians. All herps are **cold-blooded** and need to regulate their body temperature by interacting with the environment (like basking in the sun for warmth).

Reptiles have rough or scaly skin to protect them. They live on land and lay eggs with shells. **Amphibians** have smooth, sticky, and moist skin. They live on land and water, but lay gel-covered eggs in water.

Look for these symbols as you read about the herps in this guide:



Where will you find this herptile? What type of habitat does it prefer?



What is this herptile’s life cycle? How is it born? What stages might it go through?



What types of food does this herptile eat?



What behaviors does this herptile have? How does it communicate? What might you see it doing?

Fun Fact: Wisconsin is home to 37 species of reptiles and 19 species of amphibians!

COMMON GARTER SNAKE

Snake (a type of reptile) with pattern of three light stripes on a black, brown, or green background. One stripe runs down the center and two are along each side. Has “keeled” scales that have ridges that make them feel rough to the touch. Non-venomous to humans. Averages 22 inches long but can sometimes grow up to 54 inches.



Seney Natural History Association / CC BY-SA



Tony Alter / CC BY



Meadows, marshes, woodlands, and gardens. Prefer moist, grassy environments and are often found near water.



Earthworms, slugs, leeches, crayfish, snails. Occasionally small mammals or lizards. Will swallow their food whole!



Female will give birth to live young (not eggs). Young are small but grow quickly, and have to feed themselves. Live about 2-4 years in the wild.



Will bask in the sun to help regulate their body temperature. May huddle with other snakes at night to keep warm. Will hibernate Oct-Mar in burrows.

Fun Fact: The saliva of the common garter snake is slightly toxic, which helps them immobilize small prey so they can swallow them better.



EASTERN MILK SNAKE

Snake (reptile) with pattern of red or dark brown blotches, bordered in black, on top of a gray or tan background. Smooth and shiny scales without ridges. Non-venomous. Averages 24-36 inches long.



Doug McGrady / CC BY



Will Brown / CC BY



Forests, grasslands, or rocky areas. Often found around barns.



Female lays eggs, which incubate about two months and hatch in the fall. Can live about 10 years in the wild. Reaches maturity around 3-4 years.



Young eat slugs, insects, crickets, worms. Adults eat small mammals like rodents, lizards, young birds or eggs.



Nocturnal and slow moving. Very secretive and tries to blend in with ground. Will vibrate its tail when threatened.

Fun Fact: People used to think that milk snakes would drink milk from cow udders. This is not true, but they are often found near barns, likely because of all the rodents to eat!



AMERICAN TOAD

A very stout toad (amphibian) with short legs and thick, bumpy skin that is brown or olive-colored. Oval and black eyes circled with a gold color. Bumps on their skin contain glands that produce a poisonous milky fluid to protect them from predators. Begins life as a tadpole.



Mike Lewinski / CC BY



Copyright Ariane Kozel



Forests, gardens, fields near water. Require freshwater ponds when they are born, later need dense patches of vegetation for cover.



Eggs are laid in freshwater and hatch into tadpoles with small gills. Tadpoles grow hind legs first, then front legs, then reabsorb their tails before completing their metamorphosis to a toad.



Tadpoles eat algae. Adults eat insects, snails, beetles, slugs, worms that they catch with their sticky tongues.



Mostly nocturnal, but active in warm and humid weather. Call that sounds like a long trill. Their throats puff up like balloons when they call.

Fun Fact: One American toad could eat as many as 1,000 insects in a single day!



LEOPARD FROG

Medium sized frog (amphibian) with green or greenish-brown skin and brown spots everywhere except on their pale bellies. Males are smaller than females. Begins life as a tadpole.



Marshes, forests, meadows. Prefer places with slow moving water, aquatic plants.



Tadpoles eat algae. Adults eat spiders, insects, larvae, slugs, snails, worms. Large frogs may eat small frogs.



Eggs are laid underwater in a tight cluster. Will hatch into tadpoles that mature into frogs after 70-110 days. During winter, adults hibernate deep in the mud.



Solitary except in breeding season (March-June). Most active at night. May forage during the day when not breeding. Call sounds like a low, rumbly snore.



Fun Fact: Leopard frogs have large mouths and have been known to swallow other frogs, small birds, or young garter snakes!

TIGER SALAMANDER

Thick-bodied salamander (amphibian), averaging 6-8 inches in length. Short snout, thick neck, short legs, and a long tail. Usually has large, blotchy yellow spots on black skin. Young salamanders are often olive in color and gain spots a few weeks after hatching.



Forests, grasslands, or marshes. Live underground most of the year in burrows they dig.



Eggs are laid in small pools and hatch within 20-50 days. Larva remain in the pond for up to 5 months until they reach adult size. Average age in the wild is around 10 years.



Larva eat small crustaceans and insects. Adults eat worms, snails, insects, slugs.



Spend most of their lives underground in burrows that they dig themselves, which earned them the nickname “mole salamanders.”

Fun Fact: Tiger salamanders have been found in burrows 2 ft below the surface. This helps them escape extreme temperatures.



PAINTED TURTLE

Small turtle (reptile) ranging from 4 to 10 inches in length. Top shell is dark and smooth without ridges, while bottom shell is yellow or red. Has olive or black skin with yellow, orange, or red streaking on legs and neck. Adult female is larger than the male.



Seney Natural History Association / CC BY-SA



Marshes, lakes, ponds, and slow moving creeks with soft muddy bottoms, where turtles can hibernate through winter.



Aquatic plants, algae, insects, crustaceans, and small fish.



Females lay eggs in nests dug on land. Eggs incubate 72-80 days, but babies often stay in the nest over winter and emerge in spring.



Will seek shelter in water if they sense a predator, or will retract their head and legs into their shell. Will bask in groups on logs and rocks.

Fun Fact: Baby turtles break out of their eggs using a special feature on their jaw called an “egg tooth.”



SNAPPING TURTLE

Large, heavy turtle (reptile) whose rough and bumpy shell can be up to 18 inches long. Shell is dark brown, tan, or greenish-black. Has a long tail with sharp ridges, a mouth shaped like a strong beak without teeth, and webbed feet with strong claws. Cannot pull their head or legs into shell like other turtles can. Can weigh up to 35 pounds!



rickpilot_2000 / CC BY



John Winkelman / CC BY-SA



Fresh water with muddy bottoms and lots of vegetation to hide in. May be seen crossing roads or grassy areas on their way to a nest site.



Females lay eggs in sandy soil, sometimes traveling up to 10 miles to find a nest site! Eggs usually hatch in fall. Young turtles must travel to water and find their own food.



Anything they can find, including dead animals, fish, insects, small mammals, and plants.



Solitary and known to be aggressive. Spend most of their time in the water. Will bury themselves in mud for camouflage.

Fun Fact: Snapping turtles have very long necks which they can extend towards the surface of the water, allowing them to take a breath while still remaining hidden in the water.



PLANTS

Plants are living things that grow in the ground. They begin life as **seeds**. Most plants have **roots**, **stems**, and **leaves** that help them get nutrients from water, sun, and soil. They use a process called **photosynthesis** to create food from sunlight. Plants are very important because they produce **oxygen** for the world and provide a food source for many animals. There are over 300,000 types of plants, which includes trees, grasses, flowers, shrubs, and more.

Look for these symbols as you read about the plants in this guide:



Where can you find this plant? What habitat does it need to thrive?



What is the life cycle of this plant? How does it reproduce?



What resources does this plant provide to animals? Does it provide food or shelter?



How big is this plant? What are some notable features you should look for?

Fun Fact: Wisconsin is home to 1,800 species of native plants. Native plants are plants that are naturally found in an area, not brought in from somewhere else.

WHITE OAK

A large, impressive tree that provides lots of shade. Short trunk and long, strong limbs that can grow parallel to the ground. Bark is light gray with shallow furrows. Leaves have 7-9 rounded lobes.



msact / CC BY-SA



Rosemary Voegti / CC BY



Alan Levine / Public domain



Woodlands or fields, often on well-drained slopes. Trees in forests will be smaller, trees in open savannas will grow larger.



Can live to be hundreds of years old! Only produces acorns after about 50 years. Seeds are spread by wind and animals.



Acorns it produces are eaten by squirrels, birds, deer, mice, chipmunks, raccoons, and more; wood is useful for lumber.



Grows to a height of 50-80 feet and can spread its canopy to 100 ft! Leaves are 5-6 inches long with rounded lobes and turn red in fall.

Fun Fact: Some white oak trees have been found to be over 450 years old!



SHAGBARK HICKORY

Large, tall tree named for its shaggy bark that looks like it peels off in long strips. Trees produce fruit in the form of a nut with a thick, hard shell that splits open when ripe. In the spring, large buds will unfold and curl back like petals, revealing new leaves. Leaves turn yellow-brown in fall.



Plant Image Library / CC BY-SA



Plant Image Library / CC BY-SA



Plant Image Library / CC BY-SA



Forests and woodlands, scattered among maple, oak, and pine trees.



Produces flowers and fruit in mid-spring. Lifespan is 200 years, with trees producing nuts after 40 years.



Mammals like squirrels, mice, rabbits and foxes rely on the nuts for food. Wood is used for lumber.



Can grow 60 to 100 feet tall! Look for long, narrow leaves that all grow from a single stalk.

Fun Fact: Brown creepers, a small bird that climbs tree bark, will wedge their nests under this tree's peeling plates of bark.



BIG BLUESTEM

A tall, upright grass with a solid (not hollow) stem and flowers that cluster off in three parts at the top. Just below the clusters, the stem may appear blue or purple and have a waxy coating. Flowers may range from pink to purple to gold when they bloom from June to October.



Cassi Saari / CC BY-SA



Marilena / CC BY-SA



Open woods, prairies, meadows, along roadsides, especially near lowland prairies and sandy areas.



Perennial, which means it lives more than 1-2 years. Seeds are spread by animals that eat the grass, but it also spreads below the surface through its root system.



Provides shelter and protection for nesting birds and insects. Birds eat the seeds and white-tailed deer eat the grass.



Can range from 6-8 ft tall! Look for the three-part cluster at the top of grass that gives it the nickname “turkey foot.”

Fun Fact: Big bluestem is a “fire-adapted grass” and does well when exposed to fire from prescribed burns. It will grow bigger, produce more seeds, and have more stems and leaves.



COMMON MILKWEED

Tall, flowering plant with a stout stem and large, thick leaves that have a strong rib down the middle. 2 to 3 clusters of pink or purple flowers grow in spheres at the top of the plant. Grows long, large seed pods in late summer, which are green then turn brown as they dry in fall.



Dave Angelini / CC BY-SA



USFWS Midwest Region / Public domain



USFWS Mountain Prairie / CC BY



Prairies, banks or floodplains of lakes, forest edges, roadsides, and gardens.



Produces fruit in pod form that will split open as it dries, releasing 50-100 fluff-covered seeds into the wind.



Monarchs need milkweed to survive. It is the only plant where they will lay their eggs and monarch caterpillars will feed.



Can grow up to 5 ft tall. When green stalks or leaves are broken, will ooze a milky liquid that is toxic only to certain insects and animals.

Fun Fact: Milkweed is a staple in the diet of hundreds of insects (except those that it is toxic to)! Over 450 known insects will feed on various parts of the milkweed plant.



PURPLE CONEFLOWER

Flowering plant with stiff, rough stem and large purple or pink flowers with long, skinny petals. At the center of each flower is a spiny center cone that may be orange-ish in color. This cone is actually made up of tiny, small flowers and also contains the plant's seeds.



Prairies, meadows, open wooded areas, gardens.



Perennial flower which blooms from June to August. Seeds are released from the spiny cone at the center.



Insects enjoy its nectar and pollen, rabbits enjoy the leaves, and humans will dry this plant to use for herbal remedies.



Grows 2 to 4 feet tall, with flowers up to 5 inches across.

Fun Fact: Purple coneflower also goes by the name *Echinacea*. It has been used as an herbal medicine for hundreds of years. Many people take echinacea to prevent colds.



STIFF GOLDENROD

Flowering plant with lots of tiny, bright yellow flowers that grow in flat-topped clusters. Stem is stiff with broad, oval leaves.



Daniel McClosky / CC BY-SA



Joshua Mayer / CC BY-SA



Sunny places like open woods, dry fields, prairies, along roadsides.



Flowers bloom late summer early fall. Produces seeds covered in small tufts of hair that get carried off by the wind.



Important for bees and butterflies who collect its nectar and pollen. Its seeds are good for birds looking for food late in the fall.



Can grow between 3-5 ft tall. Each tiny flower can have 6 to 13 individual petals, with 30+ flowers on each cluster.

Fun Fact: Stiff goldenrod has larger, flatter flower clusters than other kinds of goldenrod, and its leaves will turn red in fall.



WILD STRAWBERRY

A creeping plant that grows low to the ground. Leaves have long, hairy stems and three leaflets with toothed edges. Flowers have white petals with a yellow center. Produces bright red strawberries you can eat, but only if the animals don't get them first!



Superior National Forest / CC BY



Ryan Hodnett / CC BY-SA



Vintage / CC BY-SA



Sunny spots in prairies, meadows, along the edge of woods and trails, and hillsides.



Produces new plants off of shoots that extend sideways from the plant. Seeds are also spread by animals that eat the berries.



The nectar and pollen of the plant feeds bees and butterflies. The fruit is a staple for many small animals and birds.



Each plant is about 4-8 inches, but many often grow together. Berries are small, maybe 1/2 inch in size, but incredibly tasty!

Fun Fact: Wild strawberry is one of two species that were bred together to create the domesticated strawberries you can find in your garden or at the store.



WOOD GERANIUM

Flowering plant with clusters of 1-10 light purple or pale pink flowers with 5 petals. Leaves are deep green and elongated, with 5-7 lobes.



Cranbrook Institute of Science / CC BY



Forests, woodlands, and meadows. Likes shaded moist areas of rich forests.



Flowers in spring to early summer. Produces seeds in spring-loaded pods that burst open, catapulting the seed up to 30ft away from the plant!



Pollen and nectar feeds bees and butterflies. Seeds feed chipmunks and birds, and deer eat the leaves.



Grows 1-2 ft tall, often clustered together in bunches.

Fun Fact: Wood geranium is sometimes called “crane’s bill” because of the beak-like shape of the fruit pod that stores the seeds.



SPIDERWORT

Flowering plant with violet, blue, or purple-pink flowers with three distinct petals, about 1 inch in length. Leaves are long, green, and slender with a deep groove down the middle.



Plant Image Library / CC BY-SA



Woodlands, hillsides, moist prairies, and gardens.



Blooms from late May to early July. Individual flowers last only 1-2 days, but more will bloom throughout the season.



Provides nectar and pollen for insects. Deer, rabbits, and turtles will eat the foliage.



Grows 1 to 2 feet tall. Flowers are small, roughly 1 inch in size.

Fun Fact: Spiderwort gets its name from the silky, threadlike substance the stem releases when it is cut or damaged, which looks like silk from a spider's web.



CHECKLIST

Keep track of the plants and animals you discover. When you see or hear something in the wild, place an “X” in the box next to its name. See how many you can find!

MAMMALS

- Eastern gray squirrel
- Eastern chipmunk
- Eastern cottontail
- Red fox
- Raccoon
- White-tailed deer

INSECTS

- Bumble bee
- Honey bee
- Monarch
- Grasshopper
- Firefly

HERPS

- Common garter snake
- Eastern milk snake
- American toad
- Leopard frog
- Tiger salamander
- Painted turtle
- Snapping turtle

PLANTS

- White oak
- Shagbark hickory
- Big bluestem
- Common milkweed
- Purple coneflower
- Stiff goldenrod
- Wild strawberry
- Wood geranium
- Spiderwort

OTHER SPECIES

YOU FIND

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Wisconsin’s diverse landscapes provide homes to a wide variety of plants and animals. What forests, grasslands, marshes or lakes have you explored in our state?

NOTES

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