



PINK TURTLEHEAD

From August to October, the white-to-pink, snapdragon-like flowers of this plant bloom along the trail in small patches.

Does the flower look to you like a turtle's head poking out of the water?



POISON IVY VINES

Among the first to change color in the fall, their yellow leaves drop to expose fuzzy vines on the trees' trunks. Even when bare, the

vines should not be touched!



STRAWBERRY BUSH

Nestled among the trees are shrubs with pointy leaves and showy red "fruit" (actually, strawberry red seed pods burst

open to reveal bright orange seeds).



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

A spot of color along the trail is the seed head of the Jack-in-the-Pulpit. Long after the familiar flower has faded and rotted away,

a slender stalk remains with bright red berries at its top.



DID YOU KNOW?

Bald cypress is one of only two North American conifers to shed its leaves in the winter.

When the path is carpeted with golden cypress needles, ripening cones are visible along the branches of these towering trees. Occasionally, winds bring down branches with both leaves and cones still attached.



TREE CAVITIES

As the temperature drops, many animals seek refuge. Natural cavities, and those carved by woodpeckers, shelter gray squirrels, flying squirrels, owls, raccoons and maybe even a wild bee hive!



PAWPAW

Along the hills leading into the swamp basin, notice small trees with broad, pointed leaves. In late fall, their ripe fruits fill the air with a sweet odor.

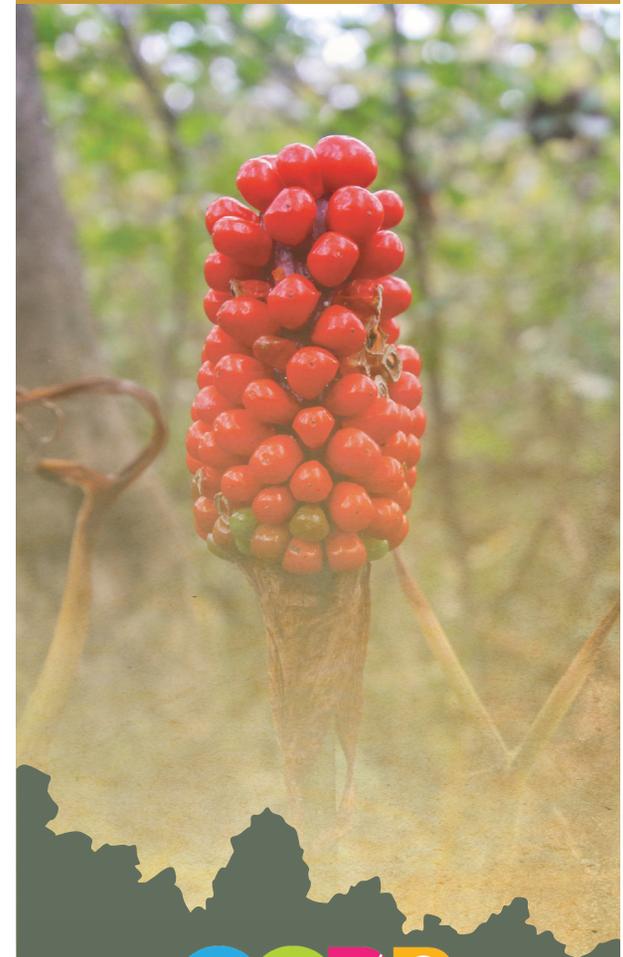


ANIMAL SIGNS

Most of the larger animals in the swamp are nocturnal, but if you look carefully, you can find traces of their activities. Raccoons, digging for crayfish, leave hand-like prints in the mud. You may also see tracks of muskrat, deer, fox and otter.

BATTLE CREEK CYPRESS SWAMP CYPRESS KNEE TRAIL

Autumn



Welcome to **BATTLE CREEK CYPRESS SWAMP**

Stop for a moment and look up. Towering 50 to 100 feet above you is the majestic bald cypress, the most abundant tree in this swamp. Its flared base is distinctive, and its feathery needles (leaves) are shed in the fall. Peculiar knobby projections poking through the mud (called "knees") are extensions of the root system. They help brace the tree, store carbohydrates, and may help provide oxygen to the submerged roots.

In the shade of these towering giants, it is easy to abandon the stress of daily living for the intimate struggle of a spider with a fly or a crayfish with mud.

Remember: Stop frequently. The trail can be walked in 15 minutes, but pause to absorb the sights and sounds, and to enrich your memory of the cypress swamp.

Look with your eyes, but see with your brain. Try to think like the animal you seek, then look for movement; you may be rewarded by the bobbing of a waterthrush at your feet or by the barred owl's quiet stare.

Listen for every little sound. Many elusive creatures reveal themselves with sound. Woodpeckers can often be spotted by following their tappings.

Enjoy your visit, but please remember to stay on the trail and leave everything as you found it for others.

