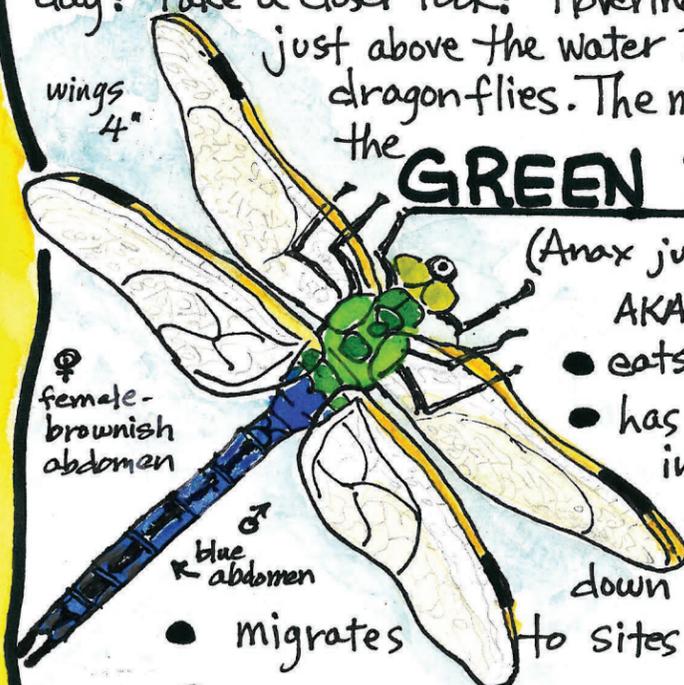


DO THE *Prairie Prowl* *

OPEN YOUR SENSES TO PRAIRIE RIDGE! STROLL THE FOREST OR PRAIRIE TRAILS, PERCH IN THE POND'S BIRD BLIND, OR MEANDER AMONG THE ARBORETUM'S NATIVE TREES. WHAT CREATURES WILL YOU SEE OR HEAR? TRACKS TO I.D.? WHO WILL SOAR OVERHEAD? ARE THERE FLOWERS TO SMELL? IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT TIME IT IS IN NATURE...

IN SUMMER...

Saunter down to the pond - serene & still on a hot, sultry day? Take a closer look! Hovering & darting just above the water are sparkling dragonflies. The most common is the



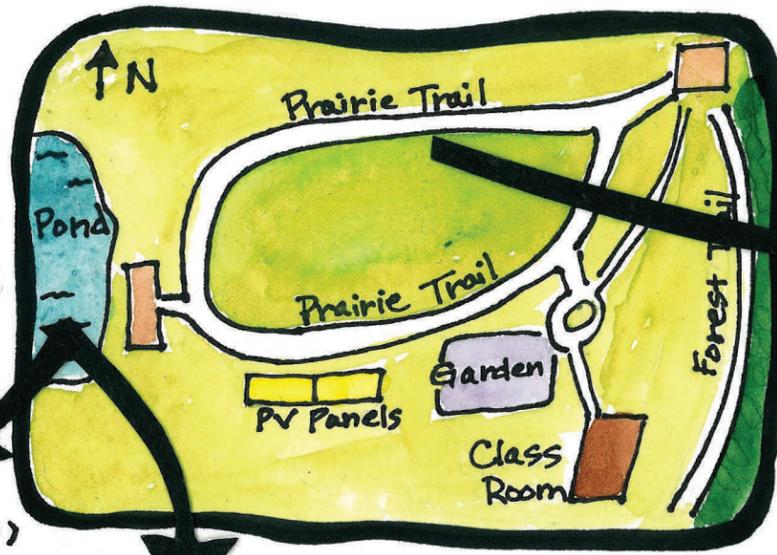
GREEN DARNER

(*Anax junius*) which is AKA "Mosquito Hawk"

- eats flying insects
- has 4 wings that beat independently
- can bring down a hummingbird!

to sites in Mexico + beyond

More? www.thedragonflywoman.com



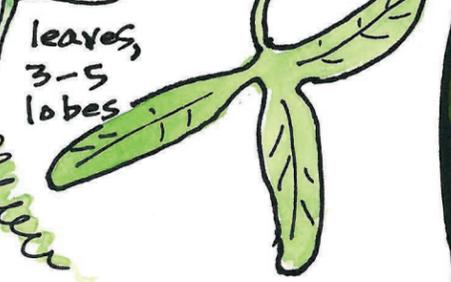
Along the Prairie Trail you may see **PASSION FLOWER**

(*Passiflora incarnata*)



with its showy flowers. Also known as Maypops. Passionflower:

- can grow to 25'
- produces a large fleshy berry 2-3" long
- is native to every NC county
- blooms May - July



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

(*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

Song - a high, gurgling trill:
"kon-ka-ree"



- often perches atop the willows by the pond
- females are mistaken for sparrows
- most widespread blackbird
- abundant in marshes & fields



* *prowl* - "to roam as if in search of whatever may be found" - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Peek under the classroom building near the steps. If you don't see a glossy black slitherer snoozing on the foundation piling, then head down below the prairie to "Rat Snake Junction..."

EASTERN RAT SNAKE

(*Elaphe obsoleta*)

- good climber
- eats small mammals, birds, eggs, and lizards
- non venomous
- head is wedge shaped
- may show white between scales
- white lips, chin, + throat
- juvenile's skin is blotchy or striped, changes to black as it matures, 3-4' long

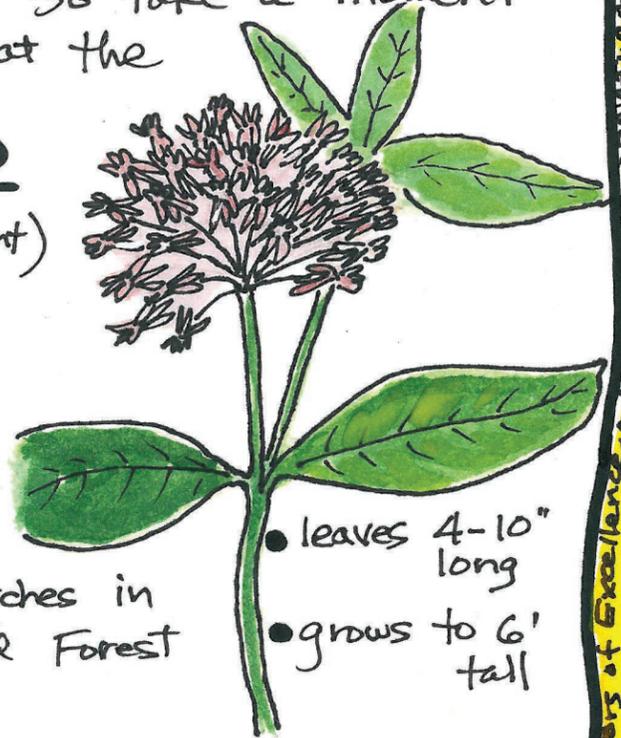


Monarch Butterflies are not the only insects that depend on milkweed for survival. Others need this plant for food and shelter - like wasps, beetles, moths, spiders, aphids, flies, etc. So take a moment to stop, squat, and marvel at the

COMMON MILKWEED

(*Asclepias syriaca*) AKA the Host (plant) with the Most (interdependent community of insects)

- fragrant pinkish-purple flowers, blooms in June
- forms a colony - look for more milkweed patches in open areas of Lowland Forest



- leaves 4-10" long
- grows to 6' tall

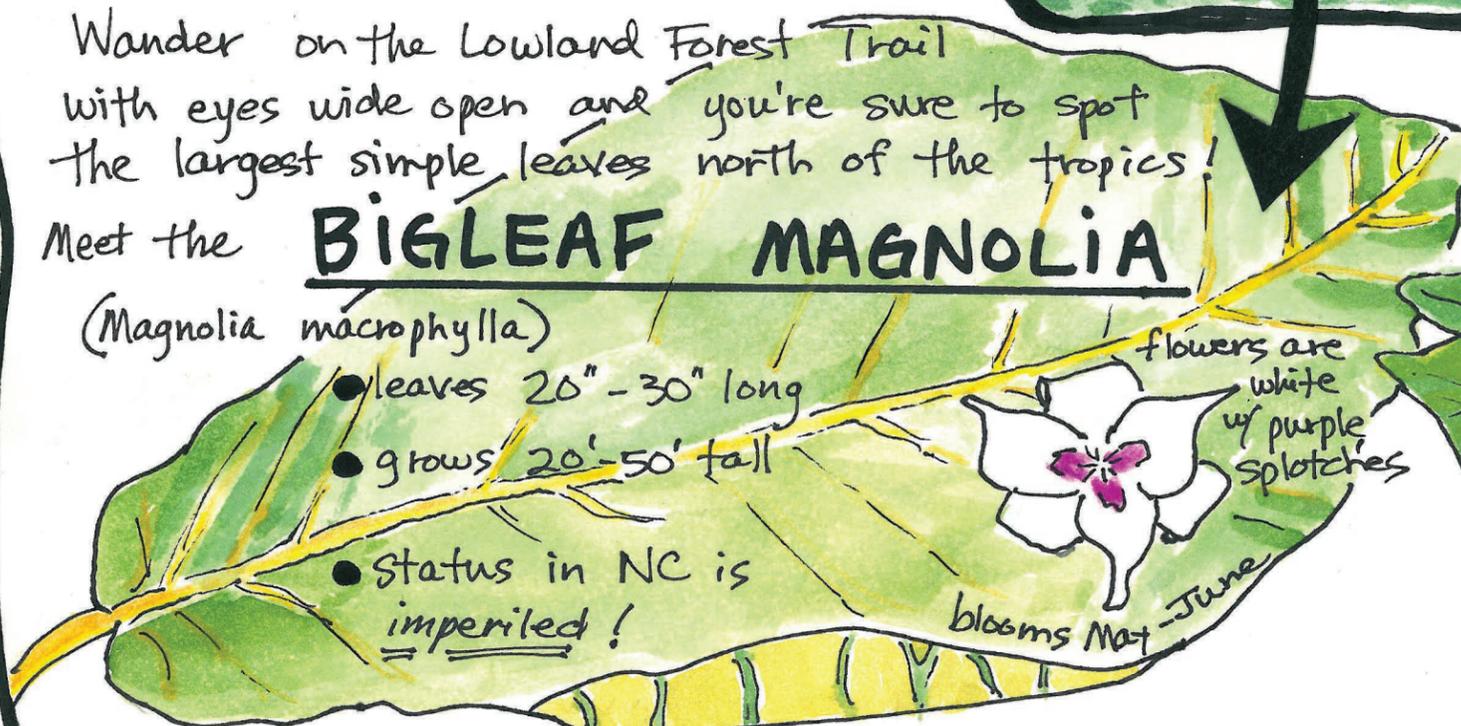
Wander on the Lowland Forest Trail with eyes wide open and you're sure to spot the largest simple leaves north of the tropics!

Meet the BIGLEAF MAGNOLIA

(*Magnolia macrophylla*)

- leaves 20" - 30" long
- grows 20' - 50' tall
- Status in NC is imperiled!

- uncommon, deciduous
- short-lived tree

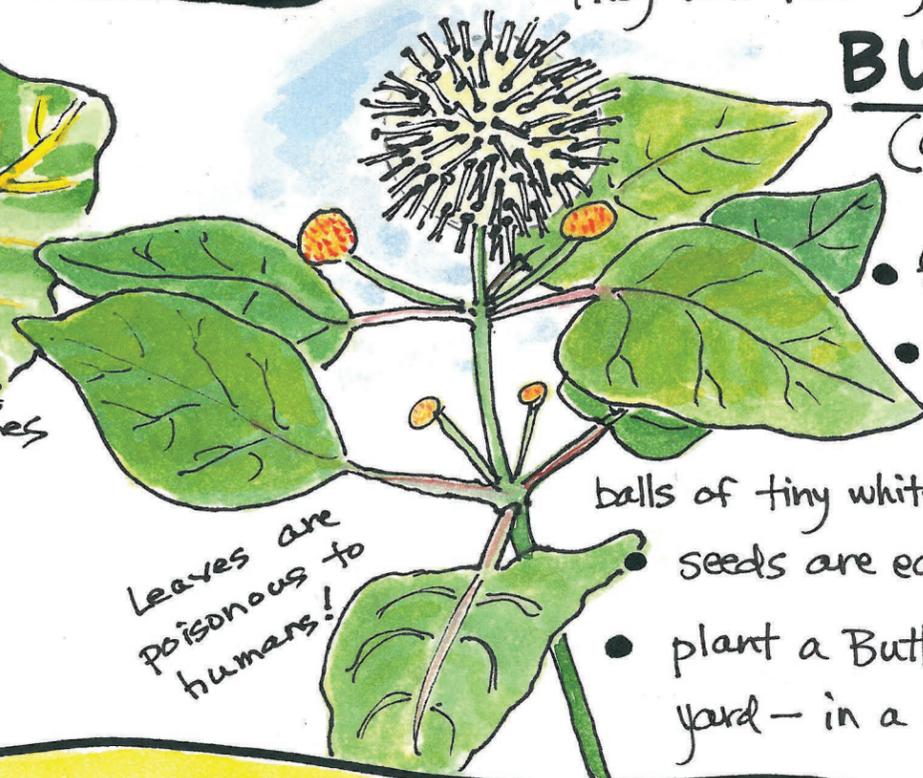


Follow the pollinators in the Lowland Forest! They will lead you to the native shrub

BUTTON BUSH

(*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

- flowers June - August
- grows 3-10' high
- blooms in 1" balls of tiny white tubular flowers
- seeds are eaten by wildlife
- plant a Button Bush in your yard - in a moist place



North Carolina
Museum of
Natural Sciences
Prairie Ridge
Ecstation

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