

Please remain off trails that are marked closed.

8. Bluebirds: You will notice that bird houses dot the meadow landscape in this area. This meadow is home to Eastern Bluebirds who traditionally raise their young in tree cavities on the edge of fields. Tree Swallows, a blue and white bird, also make use of the nesting boxes and often compete with the bluebirds for the boxes. Watch for both of these species of birds along as you walk through the meadow.



Tree Swallow

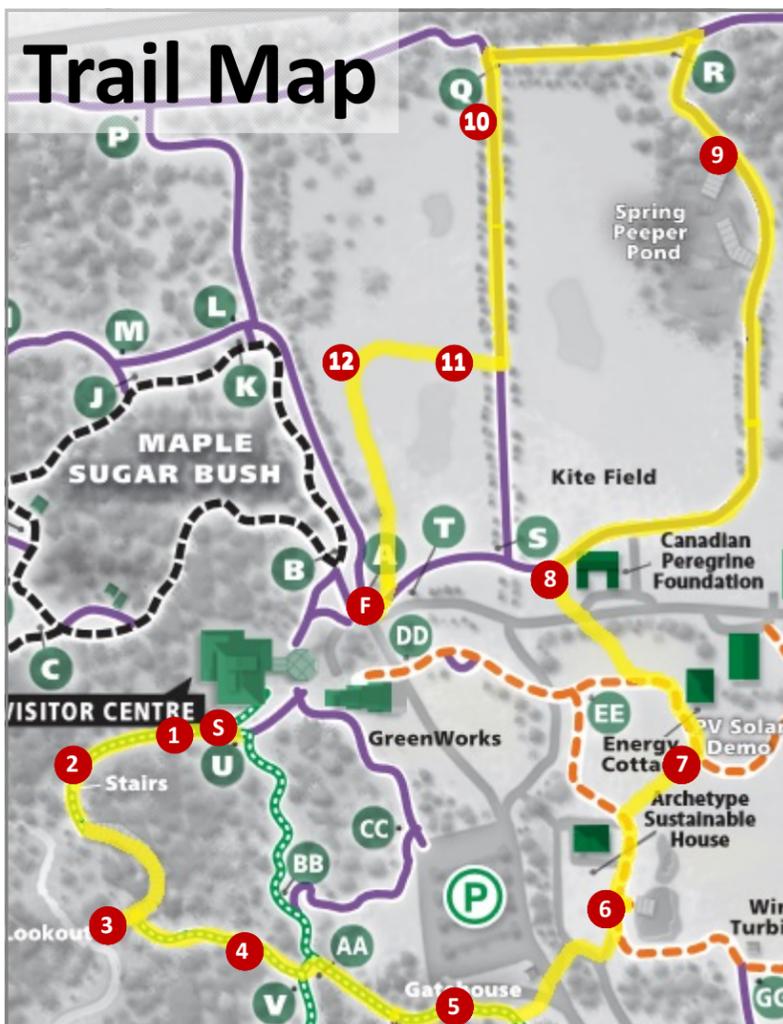


Eastern Bluebird

We hope you enjoyed using our self-guided trail pamphlet, feel free to bring this pamphlet home with you or return it to the desk in the visitors centre so other guests can enjoy it.

Thank you for visiting us at the Kortright Centre for Conservation, come back soon!

Post your wildlife sightings and follow us on twitter and facebook @KortrightCentre



Kortright Frog Call Chart

Frogs	Calling Period	Call Description
Spring Peeper	March, April and May	A series of short "peeps"
Western Chorus Frog	March and April	1 second call sound of a thumb running along a plastic comb
Gray Treefrog	May and June	A short trill
Leopard Frog	March and April	A series of chortles and chuckles
Wood Frog	March or April	A rolling, duck-like "quacking" call
Green Frog	June and July	Like the twang of a plucked banjo string "glunk"
American Toad	April and May	A 20-30 second high-pitched trill

Kortright
centre for conservation

Forests and Wetlands Spring Self-Guided Hike

The months of April, May and June are some of the best times to visit the Kortright Centre because there is an abundance of plants and wildlife. This self-guided hike will take around an hour to complete (or longer if you take your time along the way) and will lead you along parts of the Forestry Path and Perimeter Path. Along the way there are several great spots for birdwatching, wildlife viewing and photography. **Please enjoy this 8 stop self-guided hike around the Kortright trails. You can find a map of the trail referenced in this guide on the back page.**

HIKE START POINT: Right outside the doors on the bottom level.

1. Forest Wildflowers: As soon as you exit the building you enter a mixed hardwood forest made up primarily of maple, beech and ash trees as well as a few coniferous (evergreen) trees. As you walk along the path you will notice a wide variety of wildflowers on the forest floor. The flowers you can observe change from month to month and sometimes week by week depending on the weather and conditions.

Early in the spring before the leaves are fully expanded from their buds on the trees, forest wildflowers take advantage of the warm sun hitting the forest floor. They bloom early and don't last long. Can you find some of these flowers in the forest?



Trout Lily



White Trillium



Jack-in-the-Pulpit



Wild Columbine

Did you know: Trout lily leaves are mottled and spotted like the skin of a brook trout.

Did you know: The white trillium is Ontario's provincial flower.

Did you know: Flies and gnats are attracted to Jack-in-the-pulpit flowers. If they go inside a male flower they get covered in pollen, but are able to escape through a passage at the bottom of the pulpit. When they go inside a female flower there is no escape and they are forced to stay forever and (hopefully) pollinate the flower with pollen they've previously collected.

Did you know: Hummingbirds love wild columbine. In the process of eating the sweet nectar, they pollinate the flowers.

Can you spot these spring birds?



Ruby-crowned Kinglet



Wood Thrush



Great Crested Flycatcher



Magnolia Warbler

2. Leaves of Three: We are fortunate at Kortright not to have a lot of Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*); however we do have patches of it on the property, including one on the right below the sign for stop 2. Poison Ivy is a low lying or climbing woody vine that's well known for its ability to cause an itchy rash. All parts of the plant (including the roots and berries) contain a poisonous oily resin called urushiol. The rash is spread through exposure to the oily sap and many people develop symptoms 24 to 48 hours after contact. The extent of the reaction depends on a person's sensitivity and amount of sap contact with their skin. The old rhyme "leaves of three, let it be" to describe Poison Ivy holds true for the plant as well as a variety of other plants and is not the most reliable means of identification. Remembering to

Did you know? Goats and other grazing animals eat poison ivy and birds eat the berries.

stay on the trail to avoid exposure, look for a plant with three pointed leaflets. One of the key characteristics to look for is the stalk on the middle leaflet which is much longer than the two side ones, giving the leaf stalks a T-shaped appearance. The edges of the leaflet can be smooth or toothed but are rarely lobed. The leaves vary greatly in size from 8-55 mm in length. They are reddish in appearance when they appear in the spring and turn green during the summer.



Poison Ivy

3. Vernal Wetlands: On either side of the pathway you may notice small pools of water in this large field, they may just seem like puddles, but they are actually a really important part of the habitat. These pools are called vernal or ephemeral ponds and are temporary pools of water caught by the landscape when the snow melted. These pools will be wet for a few months, but typically dry up in the summer. A host of amphibians such as Blue-spotted Salamanders and Wood Frogs use vernal pools as breeding grounds and nurseries for their young. They also provide a home for mosquito larva. What do you see swimming about?

Vernal comes from the Latin vernus which means "of the spring"
Ephemeral comes from the Greek ephemeros and means "lasting for a very short time".



Wood Frog



Mosquito Larva

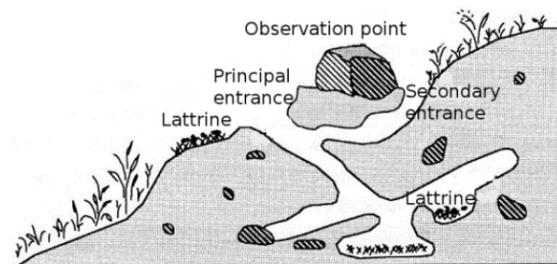


Blue-spotted Salamander

4. Chipmunks: Chipmunks are the smallest member of the squirrel family and are a familiar forest critter to many of us. Their bold and curious nature allows us to get excellent views of them as they carry on with daily life in the forest. Chipmunks are omnivores eating a wide variety of foods including nuts, seeds, berries fungus, tubers, insects and small vertebrates. They store much of the food they collect in their underground burrows. Their burrows are an elaborate maze of inter-connecting tunnels 4-10



meters in length with several entrances and exits. Chipmunk burrows contain several food galleries, nesting chamber and even a latrine (washroom)! On this section of the trail look for the circular openings to chipmunk burrows. Watch your step they sometimes build the entrances in the middle of the trail!



5. Pond vs. Swamp: This trail marks the boundary separating two different types of wetlands; a pond to the west and a swamp to the east. What is a wetland you may ask? Simply put, it is wet land, or a place where land and water meet. There are five different types of wetlands in Ontario; ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs and fens. Each type of wetland provides food, habitat and shelter for a wide variety of specific plants and animals. At the Kortright Center we are lucky have three of these types of wetlands (pond, marsh and swamp).

Swamps are forests that are flooded seasonally by standing or slow-moving water and are dominated by dead standing and live trees and shrubs. You will have to look carefully through the trees to observe the wildlife in the swamp. Each year we have a few different kinds of ducks which enjoy our swamp.

Ponds are like small shallow lakes with marsh-type plants at the edges. Ponds are usually about two meters deep or less, although they can be deeper. Cattails, bulrushes and irises grow at the edges of the pond and our pond has lots of duckweed—a tiny plant that ducks love to eat.

Did you know: Wetland plants act as great filters, taking pollutants out of the water and reducing the turbidity (or muddiness) of the water.

6. Invaders!: On the north side of the trail you may notice many tall green plants with several heart shaped leaves and small white flowers, this plant is called Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). Garlic Mustard is an invasive herb native to Europe. It was brought to North America in the early 1800 for use as an edible herb. It is high in vitamins A and C and gets its name from the distinctive smell which is similar to garlic. Rip a leaf to smell the characteristic garlic scent. Since its arrival in North America it has escaped into the wild and is now one of Ontario's most aggressive forest invaders. When it finds itself in a new area it grows quickly and takes over the understory of the forest. This means it blocks out the sun for other spring flowers like trilliums and trout lilies. Many parks and communities have organized eradication efforts each year to help manage the problem. Here at Kortright we have several corporate and community groups each year who volunteer their time to help us pull out the garlic mustard. It can take many years of hard work to get rid of an invader like Garlic Mustard.



Garlic Mustard

7. Whoooo lives in the Conifers?: As you make your way south on the trail from the post marked "Q" you will find yourself in what we affectionately call "Coyote Alley". Coyote alley created by plantings of coniferous (evergreen) trees on either side. In this coniferous forest you may observe Red Squirrels who love to eat pinecones. Owls often seek shelter and roost in coniferous trees such as the ones in this area. Look closely on the ground by the



Owl Pellet

base of the trees for owl pellets; small compact balls of fur and bones. Pellets are formed from the indigestible fur and bones from the owls last meals and are regurgitated after eating a meal.



Red Squirrel