

# Matson Hill Park

January 5, 2026

What? No Species List? Nope. We usually don't make species lists for our winter hikes because most plants are dormant. Trying to determine the species of a dormant plant from its dried-up remains is not always reliable. It serves little purpose to create unreliable species lists. So, we'll just give an overview of things that happened on our walk today.

## NOTES

There are 2 trailhead parking areas in the park. We met at the "Hays House" entrance off of Stub Road (not the Matson Road entrance). It seems that John mostly led us along the Hays Trail.

Although it's winter with only dried-up reminders of what it looked like here last summer, we were still able to make some observations as we walked:

- *Monarda fistulosa* has 2 very different varieties: a short compact one and a tall weedy-looking one
- Hop Hornbeam (*Ostrya*) trees often have marcescent leaves
- The dried-up leaves of *Silphium integrifolium* still retain the rough, pustular-bases of their hairs which contain deposits of silicon.
- Redbud branches can be very zig-zaggy
- We found a Prickly or Wafer Ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*) from the Rutaceae (Citrus Family)
- We examined the spurs of a Deciduous Holly (*Ilex decidua*)
- Gum Bumelia seedlings have thorns and red, leathery leaves
- Besides their reddish buds, Basswood trees can be identified in winter by looking for bracts in the leaf litter.
- Len pointed out that Walnut trees have brown bark (in contrast to the more grayish bark of other trees)
- Bitternut Hickories have mustard-colored buds
- Ash Flower Galls are tumorlike clusters that occur on male ash trees. They are caused by mites. The galls turn woody and persist for over a year. They do not seem to harm the tree.
- Viburnums have opposite branching that seem to be oriented at a 90° angle from the stem.
- Moonseed vines do not have tendrils, but climb up trees like a boa-constrictor.
- *Dasistoma macrophylla* (Mullein Foxglove) and *Aureolaria flava* (Smooth Yellow False Foxglove) can be confused.
- Boxelders are dioecious, which means the tree we found with samaras must be female (pistillate)
- Trumpet Creeper has aerial rootlets that grow from opposite nodes

## PARTICIPANTS:

There were 18 of us botanists today, who are (in alphabetical order):

Brenda Adams, Rick Armstrong, Renee Benage, Kathy Bildner, Steve Bizub, Jerry Castillon, Wayne Clark, June Jeffries, HD Key, Michael Laschober, Ted MacRae, Len Meier, Burt Noll, John Oliver, David Steinmeyer, Kathy Thiele, George Van Brunt, and Laura Yates.