

## Upper Grounds

### Self-Guided Tour



#### 1 The Swale Garden

The **Swale Garden** borders the drainage area that separates the crabapple grove near Taylor Road from the main lawn. Native plants create natural habitat, protective cover, and travel corridors for wildlife. The plants, flowers, fruit, and texture create a restful, natural setting highlighted by both purple iris and white shrub roses. Other plants include summersweet, inkberry, and several hardy roses.

#### 2 The Wooden Footbridge

Beyond the Swale Garden, a **wooden footbridge** spans the width of the swale and leads walkers past hardy roses to the Hosta Garden and the Daylily Garden.

#### 3 The Hosta Garden

The **Hosta Garden** has more than 150 assorted species, many commercially available and easily grown in your own yard. Companion plants include various viburnums, fothergilla, and dogwood species that add a vertical element to the garden and offer fruit and fall color. Needled evergreens provide year-round interest giving color, texture, and structure to the garden while a canopy of mature white pines creates the shade required by hosta plants. The nearby **Daylily Garden** is a low maintenance perennial garden. Varied blooming times and repeat bloomers offer a mass of color from summer to early fall. These salt-and drought-tolerant plants are easy to grow and do best in full sun.

#### 4 The Butterfly Garden

The **Butterfly Garden** is a mixed perennial and annual border providing food and shelter for the butterflies. A granite watering trough is nearby. Ruby-throated hummingbirds and the smaller hummingbird moth are often seen feeding in

*Butterfly Garden (continued)*

the garden. The Butterfly Garden flanks a wooden arbor that spans a path into a **wet meadow** situated behind the Butterfly Garden. A diversity of late summer wildflowers inhabits this full sun environment.

#### 5 The Herb Garden

The Arboretum's **Herb Garden** is a replica of a typical 1700s herb garden with medicinal, culinary, and stewing herbs. It nestles in an old field stone foundation. Flowers, fruit, and foliage take visitors back to colonial times when the herb garden was a mainstay of life and health. Perimeter plantings complement the herb garden. Old fashioned purple and white lilacs accent the greens and grays of the herbs while the dainty pink flowers of the silverbell tree create a stunning spring display. In the fall, birds are drawn to the garden to feast on the bayberries. Other ornamentals include Cornelian Cherry dogwood, Japanese flowering quince, and inkberry.

#### 6 The Old Apple Orchard

This trail passes through an **old apple orchard** where cottontail rabbits are often seen. The brambles along the edge of the trail provide good cover and protection from predators.

#### 7 The Dug Pond

This **dug pond** is the only pond in the Arboretum that lies in full sun. Cattails have colonized the pond while green frogs and American toads use the pond as an annual breeding area. Seasonal groundwater fluctuation dries up the pond eliminating any fish thereby making the pond ideal for amphibian breeding.

#### 8 The Open Meadow

The **open meadow** provides a diverse habitat for many song bird species such as song sparrows, cat birds, and other meadow-nesting birds.

*Open Meadow (continued)*

Further along, a side trail passes the **Rhododendron Garden**. Come here to find splashes of color in the early spring. The trail circles the edge of meadow to rejoin the Wildflower Loop Trail.

#### 9 The Red Maple Swamp

This boardwalk passes through a **red maple swamp** and over a brook. Look for the fern collection on both sides of the trail.

#### 10 The Farm Quarries

Look carefully to see where a farmer may have quarried fence posts or foundation stones from the granite. This is one of two **farm quarries** near trails in the Arboretum.

#### 11 The Wildflower Garden

On the hillside above this boardwalk, the **Wildflower Garden** displays native New England wildflowers common to a hardwood forest. The wildflowers peak from early April through May. The later-blooming varieties help carry the garden into the summer and beyond. If you look closely along the trail connecting the two boardwalks, you may notice more wildflowers planted in the woodland habitat.

#### 12 The Farm Ponds

These two **farm ponds** have vertical sides and a bottom covered with flat rocks, indicating that the landowner dug them some time in the past. The larger upstream pond is on private property. During the summer months the ponds are covered by a thin floating layer of duckweed and water meal. Both ponds provide excellent wildlife habitat and serve as vernal pools.

#### 13 The Lilac Collection

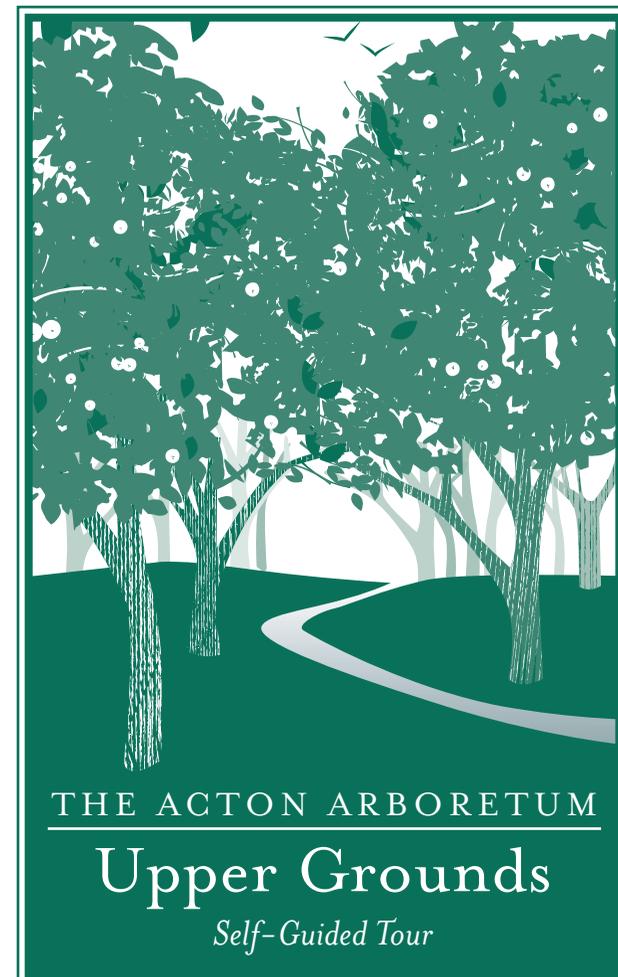
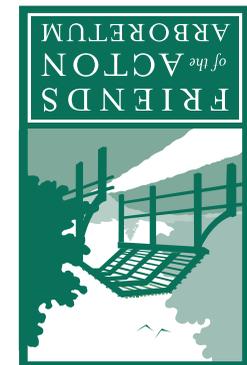
From the farm pond return to the Orchard Loop Trail. A **Lilac Collection** lines this trail.

P.O. Box 2607, Acton, MA 01720  
FRIENDS of the ACTON ARBORETUM, INC.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER  
THE TOWN OF ACTON, PROGRESS / SUSAN CONNOR  
SPECIAL THANKS TO:

*Arboretum in order to achieve these goals.  
and other gifts and talents in support of the Acton  
Friends contribute time, money, plants  
our natural resources for educational purposes.  
world and share a vision of preserving and enhancing  
We are a group of citizens who care about the natural*

WHO ARE THE FRIENDS?



THE ACTON ARBORETUM  
**Upper Grounds**  
Self-Guided Tour