provide dense shade and an acidic understory that limits shrub growth. Few birds find this area a safe place to nest although owls, hawks, or crows might be seen high up among the tree tops. Look for the “Forest Stones” nearby.

16 Esker

You are standing atop an esker, a raised gravel stream bed left by a melting and receding glacier. The presence of pitch pines and dominance of oaks plus a wide variety of other trees that are adapted to dry conditions provide evidence of the esker’s dry glacial gravel base. The esker is a mini-contentional divide for this lower part of the arboretum. The great swamp on the trail’s west side drains south into Coles Brook and the Fort Pond Brook watershed while the east-side wetlands and bog drain east into the Nashoba Brook watershed.

17 Bog

This 2.5 acre bog is a classic glacially-created wetland that has been colonized with bog plants. Its sphagnum moss bed is about 16' deep in some places. As with most peat lands, no stream flows into this bog, significantly limiting the nutrients entering the bog. There is no constant supply of oxygen which is necessary to fuel the bacterial decomposition process. Both of these factors slow the rate of biologic decomposition of the organic matter and keep the environment very acidic, often with a pH less than 4.0. As a result, plants grow here that are unable to gain a foothold in other environments, plants such as northern pitcher plants and members of the heath family such as leatherleaf.

18 Wildlife Corridor

The dense shade and thick acidic decomposing needle litter on the forest floor limit shrub growth. An exception can be found along this telephone easement running through the property where sapling black birch, red maple, and buckthorn grow in profusion. For large animals such as white-tailed deer, red fox, and coyotes, this old telephone easement provides an important east/west travel corridor through the arboretum, along with necessary cover for these mammals.

19 Farm Quarry

Quarrying was done in Acton throughout the 1800s, but did not become a major industry until the 1880s. Earlier times saw small-scale quarrying being done by farmers to cut fence posts and foundation stones. Many quarries such as this can be found scattered throughout the woods in Acton.

20 Ledge Outcrop

Here is a very steep exposed ledge topped with junipers. At the base of the ledge is a small cluster of tupelo trees. Tupelo is fairly rare in Acton and is generally considered to be a wetland species, tolerant of flooding. There is a small seep or spring at the base of the ledge, which provides a constant water supply for both the tupelos and the American cranberry bush growing next to the tupelos.

21 Old Orchard

This old apple orchard with fairly high ground water has a number of very large old apple trees that are hollow and in advanced stages of decline. The trees provide den areas for raccoons, red and gray squirrels, deer mice, and white-footed mice. This area is densely overgrown with honeysuckle and multiflora rose, providing nesting habitat for many of the same species found in an edge habitat. Blue jays and yellow-billed cuckoos nest in this protected environment.