Many birds travel through Chicago as they migrate to different locations throughout the year. This bird garden is planted with trees, shrubs, and groundcover that offer food, protection, and nesting sites to birds in the area.

Prairies are home to many grasses and wildflowers but very few, if any, trees. Fires help to control the growth of non-prairie plants like trees. Prairie plants survive these fires because their growing buds are below ground.

This small wetland provides a home for plants, animals, and other living things. It gets its name from a flowering wetland plant known as pickerelweed. Invertebrates such as dragonflies, beetles, and snails, and vertebrates such as Canada geese and tadpoles, can often be found in this small pond.

Savannas are grasslands with scattered trees. Fire-resistant bur oak trees are speckled throughout this savanna, providing a mix of sun and shade for the plants that grow beneath them.

The edible plants in this garden—onions, herbs, tomatoes, and more—grow well in the Chicago area. Our horticulturists start planting seeds in the early spring and keep the harvest going all through the growing season.

In a savanna, trees (in this case, black oak trees) grow scattered among the grasses and wildflowers. The plants in the Black Oak Sand Savanna are growing in sandy soil that was once a sand dune on Lake Michigan’s shore.

This parkland has a traditional lawn area and many scattered shade trees. Several bird feeders attract birds and squirrels to this area.
how to use your nature trails guide

Use the map to find signs around Nature Trails with more information about each habitat. The placement of each sign is marked with a star (★) on the map. These signs will provide facts about the living things in each area and can be used as field guides for identifying what you observe.

- **DON’T WORRY ABOUT BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY EVERYTHING YOU SEE**
  Visiting the outdoor space is about making careful observations, comparisons, and connections. If necessary, prompt students with questions, such as:
  
  “What else do you notice this looks like?”
  “Why do you think you see this happening here?”
  “Where have you seen something like this before?”

- **PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A GENERAL FOCUS FOR EXPLORING THE OUTDOOR AREAS**
  Compare and contrast different habitats or observing various leaf shapes, but give them the freedom to enjoy their surroundings and make their own connections.

- **MODEL CAREFUL OBSERVATION SKILLS**
  Describe specific shapes, smells, and sounds and encourage students to make close observations.

- **PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION AND RESEARCH**
  Please do not allow students to remove natural objects (e.g. flowers, leaves, rocks, feathers) from the Nature Museum grounds, or feed or chase any animals.

- **ALLOW STUDENTS TO SHARE INTERESTING THINGS THAT THEY OBSERVE**
  Either facilitate a group discussion or have them complete a post-visit activity back in the classroom.

- **TOUR THE MUSEUM GROUNDS ALL YEAR — NO MATTER THE SEASON**
  Many living things remain active in Chicago throughout the entire year.

  Please return this guide back to the Front Desk no later than 45 minutes after check out.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Chicago Park District on behalf of the citizens of Chicago.