



Young Forest Scavenger Hunt

Young forest, or early successional forest, is an important habitat type for many species of wildlife. It is characterized by young dense growth and an open canopy. Explore your property and see how many of these young forest plants and animals you can find!

Common Young Forest Plants



Aspen saplings are an early colonizer of upland young forest sites that shoot up from the roots of harvested parent trees. What do the leaf stems of aspen feel like?



Blackberry and raspberry are thorny plants that provide fruit and nesting substrate for young forest species. Why do you think thorns are helpful to the plant? _____



Dense and diverse herbaceous growth is abundant in young forest because the open canopy allows sunlight to reach the forest floor. How many different kinds of herbaceous plants (not trees) can you find in 1 minute? _____



Alder shrubs are found in many lowland young forest sites. Notice the distinct bark of older shrubs, with pores called lenticels. How wet is the soil alder grows in? _____

Young Forest Wildlife



Chestnut-sided Warblers are a common bird in young forest. Careful not to confuse them with Golden-winged Warblers, which also have a yellow cap. How many Chestnut-sided Warblers can you count?



Indigo Buntings sing loudly in quick coupled notes. Don't be confused by the female, which is plain brown. Do you know of any other birds that are blue?



Eastern Towhee is a type of sparrow. It spends much of its time on the ground looking for food in leaf litter. Can you hear them sing, "drink your tee-he-he" ?



Brown Thrashers sing loudly with phrases repeated in pairs. Can you think of any other birds with spots like this one has?



Golden-winged Warblers have a distinctive buzzy song and nest on the ground in young forest. They migrate to Central or South America for the winter. Do you know of any other wildlife that migrate?



White-throated Sparrows have a bright white throat and yellow eye-brow. They sing "oh sweet Canada Canada Canada." Do you know of any other types of sparrows?

Young Forest Wildlife



Snowshoe Hares are brown in summer and white in winter. They enjoy eating the shoots of young forest plants. Why do you think changing colors is an important adaptation? _____



Although **Moose** are rare in Wisconsin, they like to hang out in young forest. What mammals can you find in your young forest? _____



The **Smooth Green Snake** eats spiders and insects and blends into young forest habitat well. Have you seen any reptiles on your property? Which ones? _____



Ruffed Grouse are a game bird that nest in young forest. Much of their winter diet is buds and twigs of aspen. What other kinds of birds eat plants? _____



Bobcat are stealthy predators and rarely seen by people. Bobcat populations are declining because of loss of young forest and habitat fragmentation. What do you think a bobcat eats? _____



American Woodcock are a type of shorebird that feed and nest in young forest. Males perform a nocturnal flight display in spring to attract a mate. Look for this display around sunset each night. Can you find a displaying male? Describe the display. _____
