

Trail Guide from Hemlock Brook Trail and Margaret Lindley Park to Harmon Pond

This trail starts from the Hemlock Brook Trail in Margaret Lindley Park, rises over a ridge to Sweetbrook Road and to Harmon Pond.

The trail starts to rise quickly to the first level of terrace along the brook. It will be passing through predominantly Hemlock woods, rather dark and with no undergrowth because of the shade and acidic soil. Hemlocks thrive in poor wet soil on the north-facing slopes.

Walking along the top of the first terrace for about 100 yards, on your right you will see a large old Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), 30" DBH, with Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*) as ground cover. Soon on your left is a Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), 22" DBH, large for a Yellow Birch, with its characteristic curly silver-yellow bark that will become rough as the tree ages. Before the trail turns left is a Black Birch (*Betula lenta*) with black platy bark, of 16" DBH, which is also large for a Black Birch.

Turning left and starting up a slight rise, find another large Black Birch, and a sizable Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) with more shreddy bark. Proceeding about 15 feet along, there is a huge old Hemlock, 32" DBH, one of the largest around here. About 30 feet on, one passes between two Yellow Birches.

The trail passes through a massive tangle of fallen trees, perhaps from windstorm and disease. Another large Hemlock here is still standing tall. On one of the rotted stumps note a "Varnished Conk" a large shelf fungus. About 30 feet on, notice on your right a magnificent straight Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), 34" DBH, one of the largest in this park.

The trail passes into an area of younger trees, which may indicate more recent human impact. It crosses a wet rocky area and rises toward the ridge. A small boggy area on your right serves as a Vernal Pool in the spring.

Cross Sweetbrook Road and follow the red-blazed trail that passes through more Hemlocks along a boggy marsh. Ferns abound. Cross the bog bridge and bear right under more Hemlocks. Look to the left, off the trail, to see a large Red Maple, 28" DBH, spreading its branches upward. Red Maples, like Hemlocks, tolerate or even thrive on poor wet soil.

Moving along through more fallen trees, take a sharp right and cross the wet area again. Here there are many remains of upturned roots and fallen trees. Bear left toward the pond and then a right. Look back to see some magnificent Hemlocks. You will move through massive Hemlocks and Eastern White Pines (*Pinus strobus*). The trail comes into a more open area of second growth. Turning left you head toward the pond. The trail winds along the banks of the pond, under old Hemlocks. There are three large Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*) trees, unusual for this elevation. Look for the tiny Red Spruce seedlings and saplings along the trail. Soon you go down a steep bank to the dam, and the trail will continue over it to Harmon Pond Road.