



The Montshire Museum Ridge Trail Quest

Norwich, Vermont

Moderate

Natural, Vista

1:00

Trail

To get there: The Montshire is located in Norwich, Vermont. Take I-91 to Exit 13 and head east towards Hanover, New Hampshire. Very quickly, you will turn south at your first opportunity. Follow the signs to the Museum parking lot. The quest begins inside the Museum.

Please note: the Montshire Museum and property is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission is charged for non-members. Children under 2 are free.

**The Ridge Trail is marked with blue blazes/metallic markers, and exhibit trail spurs are marked with black arrow blazes/orange paint.*

Clues:

Climb the stairs up the tower and past the third floor.
See the bridge to the Ridge Trail just outside the door.
Cross the bridge, and enjoy the view.
Use the speaking tubes and friends can talk to you.

Up the stairs to the right, and continue up the hill.
If it's early in spring, there are wildflowers, still.
Hepatica, bloodroot, trillium and more!
Follow the blue blazes to see what else is in store.



hepatica



bloodroot



trillium

Turn to the left when you see a white pine.
Now you follow the Ridge Trail to see sights so fine.
Forty paces ahead, you'll find decomposition,
Of logs and leaves full of cellulose and lignin.
These things are in plant cells, and make them quite strong,
So their time 'til decay is incredibly long!
Continue along the path and listen for sounds
Of birds, squirrels and chipmunks around.

Guess the temperature in the trees and underground
Several thermometers to your right can be found.
They tell you how cool it is up high and below,
So you can see how animals live above and beneath the snow.

Further down on your left, touch the bark on the trees.
Then across from this exhibit, get down on your knees,
And peer into holes in a tree in the way,
To see how pileated woodpeckers eat every day.
They bore and they drill for those carpenter ants,
That live in the bark and the wood of big plants.

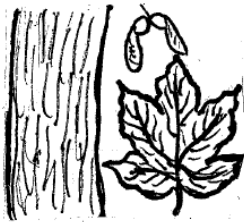
Stroll along a while and you'll see to your left,
The big roots of a tree snaking through the rock clefts.
Walk down the hill, touching moss to your right,
To a site where you will see the signs of beech blight.
An insect intruder brings with it a deadly fungus
You'll see the bark is not smooth in some beeches among us.

Cross a bridge a ways down to keep your feet dry.
Continue following blazes blue as the sky.
Keep an eye out for plants that are called "princess pine".
You may recognize them from holiday wreathes so fine.
But don't hurt these plants because they're ancient and fragile
They may look like babies, but they've been here a long while.
This species existed before the last ice age.
Only a few inches tall, they remain at this stage.

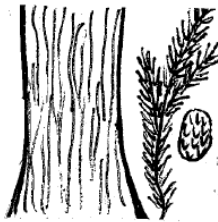


princess pine

Move past the pines to get a bird's eye view
From a platform in the trees you'll see the world anew.
Identify sugar maple, hemlock, red oak and beech.
And you'll feel like their branches are within your reach!



sugar maple



hemlock



red oak



beech

Back on the trail and ahead to your right,
There's a mossy outcrop just within sight.
Covered with tiny plants, including mosses and fern.
Look closely and touch them. There's so much to learn!
Don't forget to look left to the logs on the ground.
A fungus called "turkey tails" grows abound.
And straight down this path is an "erratic" stone,
Carried down by a glacier and left here alone.

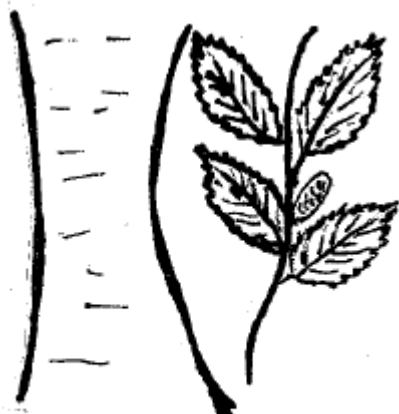


turkey tails

Return to Ridge Trail again, and move your feet
A ways down the path, a sign you will meet.
But first you will walk past some rocky ledges.
Covered with mosses all over the edges.

Then the sign: "Wood Frog Pool". You should pay it a visit.
There are amphibians in there. Be sure not to miss it!
Spotted salamander, wood frogs, tadpoles you might see.
But these animals are delicate, so please let them be.
This "vernal pool" is deep in the spring,
Because of the water that melted snow brings.
All of this water collects on the ground.
But come late summer, there's no pool to be found.
That's 'cause plants drink the water, and sun warms its surface
And the pool starts to dry...making young tadpoles nervous!

Return to the trail. Your journey is almost through.
Just continue following those blazes of blue.
To the intersection between Hazen and Ridge,
And you'll find your treasure just before the bridge.
Look to your left to a large yellow birch tree,
And under its huge roots, a hollow you'll see.
You'll find a box with a logbook inside.
Sign your name here, and be sure to re-hide.



yellow birch

You can walk right to Pluto, a long way away,
Or over the bridge to the Montshire, and finish your day.

Congratulations on finding your treasure!
We hope that this hike has been a pleasure.