



## Leaflet

**Activity sheets** are available online or from the info boxes.

### ❖ Forest restoration - One of the biggest projects since the establishment of the park

Restoration of the natural area between the stream and the train tracks is a top priority item on the Merion Botanical Park's master plan. The project continues to gain momentum with the \$5,000 grant awarded by the Merion Community Association this fall. The grant will support our stewardship plan, but it will take several years, many volunteer hours and more funding to accomplish our final goals: controlling invasive plants, creating a pleasant place for visitors and improving habitat for wildlife.

Please consider a special donation to support our forest restoration.




#### Next steps:

- Obtaining a restoration and stewardship plan from a restoration expert.
- Working on controlling invasive plants, starting with species of highest priority: burning bush, tree-of-heaven, multiflora rose, etc. See full list at the end of this booklet.
- Working with township to control poison ivy, a native plant with high wildlife value, but what is considered a noxious weed. LM township has an ordinance against poison ivy.
- Planting native species, starting with trees and shrubs to take the place of removed invasive plants.
- Restoring the native groundcover layer, including spring ephemerals and other perennials.



## ❖ What do wildlife feed on in the winter?





Some of these are suitable for human consumption as well!

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Beech tree nut</b> (<i>Fagus sp.</i>)</p> <p>The fruit of the beech tree, the <i>beechnut</i> grows in small burrs that drop from the tree in autumn. It is small, roughly triangular and edible, with a bitter, astringent taste. Nuts have a high enough fat content that they can be pressed for edible oil.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Oak tree acorn</b> (<i>Quercus sp.</i>)</p> <p>The acorn, a nut, is borne in a cup-like structure. Each acorn contains one seed (rarely two or three) and takes 6–24 months to mature, depending on the species. Wildlife that consumes acorns as an important part of their diets includes insects, birds and mammals. Humans also used acorns for food throughout history.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maple fruit (samara)</b> (<i>Acer sp.</i>)</p> <p>These samaras occur in pairs each containing one seed enclosed in a "nutlet" attached to a flattened wing. They spin as they fall and carry the seeds a considerable distance on the wind. During World War II, the US Army developed an air drop supply carrier that could carry up to 65 pounds of supplies and was based on the maple seed.</p> <p>"To eat maple tree seeds you need to remove the wings. Some people will eat the seed pod as a trail snack however, many people like to roast or boil them - See more at: <a href="http://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2013/01/maple-tree-seeds-survival-food/#sthash.OHch8PWN.dpuf">http://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/2013/01/maple-tree-seeds-survival-food/#sthash.OHch8PWN.dpuf</a>"</p>

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Black walnut</b> <i>(Juglans nigra)</i></p> <p>The hard shell is tightly bound to a thick husk. The husk is best removed when green. Black walnut is shelled commercially and used for desserts. While the flavor of the kernel is very good, it is difficult to take the walnut "meat" out of the hard shell. Squirrels need to work hard to get to the edible part – sometimes even giving up before getting there.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chinese scholar tree pods</b> <i>(Sophora japonica)</i></p> <p>The ornamental yellow-green seedpods are 6 to 8 inches long, and persist well into the winter. They resemble strings of beads. (Tree is in the same family as peas, and beans.) "the benefits of pagoda tree go far beyond its medicinal uses – its flowers can be used as yellow dye, seeds as industrial oil, fruits as a source of sophorose and rutin drugs, and trunks as the timber for construction of buildings, shipbuilding, farming implements and furniture." <a href="http://www.chineseherbshealing.com/sophora-japonica/">http://www.chineseherbshealing.com/sophora-japonica/</a></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>American holly</b> <i>(Ilex opaca)</i></p> <p>A native tree that can reach 50 ft tall, but usually only 15-30 ft tall. Birds and mammals feed on the red berries. Larval source for butterflies. This native plant has dull yellow-green leaves while the exotic holly species have shiny leaves.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">Amur corktree (<i>Phellodendron amurense</i>) Non-native, <b>invasive</b></p> <p>Pea sized fruit held in clusters only on female plants. It turns from green to black and is consumed by birds at the beginning of the winter. Aromatic when crushed. The oil from the seeds has insecticidal properties and contains many chemicals used for medicine.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sweetgum (<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>)</p> <p>The 1–1.5 inch diameter compound fruit is hard, dry, and round. It is composed of 40-60 capsules, each containing one to two small seeds and has a pair of terminal spikes (80-120 spikes total). The seeds are about one-quarter of an inch thick, winged, and wind-dispersed. Goldfinches, purple finches, squirrels, and chipmunks eat the seeds of the tree.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Viburnum (<i>Viburnum</i> sp.)</p> <p>Many native and exotic species of shrubs produce red or blue berries. Birds and mammals eat the berries, but some are also suitable for human consumption.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Magnolia (<i>Magnolia</i> sp.)</p> <p>Black seeds are covered in red coating and develop in a pine cone-like structure. Squirrels, white-footed mice, turkeys, quails and songbirds digest the seed coating and spread the seeds.</p>

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	<p style="text-align: center;">Little bluestem (<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>)</p> <p>A bunchgrass of the prairie, its seeds are consumed by birds and small mammals. Also used for nesting material and cover. Larval host for many butterflies.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Gayfeather (<i>Liatris spicata</i>)</p> <p>This tall native perennial has beautiful pink-purple flower in the summer that attract bees and butterflies. Come fall and winter, finches and sparrows perch on the stems and eat the small seeds.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)</p> <p>The spent flower head is full of small, seed-like fruit that is a food source for many birds. Seeds are ripe when light brown or grayish in color.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Eastern white pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)</p> <p>The largest conifer of the Northeast, it grows 75-100 ft, or taller. Needles are borne in clusters of 5. It is very valuable for wildlife providing food and shelter for birds and mammals.</p>



## ❖ Invasive plants that are on the “Least Wanted” list

Many plants provide food for wildlife. Not all of them are recommended for planting, however, because of their invasive tendencies. Many different species were brought to the US as ornamental plants. Now these same species are threatening forest and wetland ecosystems.

Please do not plant invasive plants. If you have any of these in your yard, consider replacing them with non-invasive alternatives. Check out the society’s web site for resources on native plants, or contact us for other suggestions.

### High priority invasive plants in our forest:

*Acer platanoides* – Norway maple

*Ailanthus altissima* – tree-of-heaven

*Celastrus orbiculatus* – Oriental bittersweet

*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* – Porcelain-berry

*Phellodendron amurense* – Amur corktree

*Rosa multiflora* – Multiflora rose

*Alliaria petiolata* – Garlic mustard

*Aralia elata* – Japanese angelica-tree

*Euonymus alatus* – Winged euonymus (burning bush)

*Hedera helix* – English ivy

*Rubus phoenicolasius* – Wineberry

*Lonicera japonica* – Japanese honeysuckle

*Ligustrum obtusifolium* – Border privet

