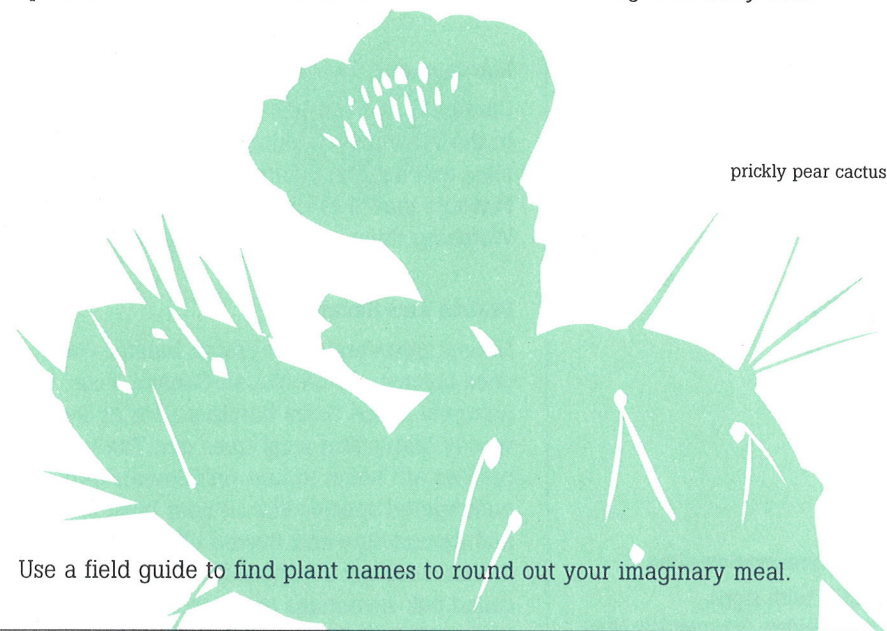


A Carolinian Snack

Here is a menu of some native Carolinian plants. If the names were edible (most of the plants are not) would you have all the four basic food groups?

Hint: the groups are breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products, nuts/legumes, meats and fish.

wild potato-vine	prickly pear (cactus)	hairy wild rye
Canada plum	honey locust	purple milkweed
sand cherry	wild yam	bladdernut
yellow mandarin	summer grape	nodding wild onion
spicebush	corn-salad	running strawberry bush



prickly pear cactus

Use a field guide to find plant names to round out your imaginary meal.

Canada's Banana Belt

Watch for orchards, greenhouses, roadside markets and vegetable stands. Carolinian Canada has many southern crops. There are peanuts, vineyards, tobacco fields and orchards of fruits such as peaches. Look for ginseng fields too, with their wooden screens built for shade.

Fresh fruit, vegetables and nursery plants, like the wild plants that once lived there, enjoy rich soil and excellent climate. Farmers had to remove natural habitats to grow these crops. But today farmers are now protecting many of the last and best natural habitats on private land in the area.

Find the Elephants of Ontario

There are at least two elephants in southern Ontario. Turn an Ontario road map sideways to find one. Point Pelee National Park is a tusk on the trunk. Rondeau Provincial Park is the mouth. A big toe is not far from Niagara Falls. A raised knee is at Long Point. Can you find the rest of the body?

Go to St. Thomas to see the second elephant. A life-sized statue of Jumbo the circus elephant is at the tourist booth. Ask the folks there about animals that really live in the area.

Connect the Woodlots

Study fields and woods as you travel. Imagine you are a woodland vole or Louisiana Waterthrush living in the woods. You are surrounded by a sea of farms and open ground. If you want to visit your neighbours, crops and pasture offer little protection from predators. You are marooned in your island of green.

Now look from forest to forest. Are the woods connected by bushes or rows of trees? These fence-rows and hedge-rows are wildlife highways. The more hedge-rows, the better wildlife can move around and survive. Imagine connecting lonely woodlots yourself. Many farm families, school classes and conservation groups are planting hedge-rows to improve the farm environment.

Check It Out

Make a list of all the different trees, plants, birds, mammals or other living creatures you identify along the way. This is a good habit for any nature trip. Practise by making a list of all the different species you read about in this issue of *Nature Notes*.

GM of Canada is pleased to be the sponsor of this FON series. While your family is travelling throughout the province, we encourage you to discover *Nature Along the Way*.

Remind your parents that every 45 kg (100 lbs) of extra weight consumes 1% more fuel. This means that removing unnecessary roof racks and other weight from your car will reduce fuel consumption.

A VOYAGE TO

Carolinian Canada

Discovering Nature Along The Way

Have you ever seen a southern bayou? Or a leafy forest crawling with vines? Have you visited a prairie? Or watched thousands of hawks and other birds in mass migration? Habitats and happenings like these are closer than you think.

Just around the corner (of Lake Ontario) is Carolinian Canada. Its name comes from its nature. This is where Ontario plunges southwards towards the Equator and reaches a latitude equal to that of California. It is Canada's most southern region. The climate is warm and the winters are mild. Ontario nature is spiced up here with plants and animals more common in places like North and South Carolina.

From Toronto to Sarnia to Windsor, there are around 5 million people living in Carolinian Canada. But there is still habitat for exotic egrets, two-metre-long black rat snakes, opossums, sassafras and tulip-trees. Hectare for hectare there are more plant and animal species than in any other natural region in Ontario.

Put Carolinian Canada on the map

Make an eco-map for your voyage to Carolinian Canada. Get an Ontario Provincial Highway Map and a thick highlighting marker. Connect the dots of the places below. The line you draw is the northern border of Carolinian Canada. Most of the southern plants and animals you are reading about are rarely if ever found north of that line.

Connect from east to west:

Pickering, Markham, Unionville, Richmond Hill, Maple, King City, Kleinburg, Woodbridge, Bramalea, Brampton, Buttonville, Ashgrove, Milton Heights, Campbellville, Kilbride, Carlisle, Freelon, Sheffield, Branchton, Ayr, Roseville, New Dundee, Plattsville, Bright, Tavistock, St. Pauls Station, St. Marys, Granton, Elginfield, Birr, Ilderton, Denfield, Ailsa Craig, Parkhill, Corbett, Grand Bend.

Extreme facts

What the Carolinian zone means to Canada

- * Some of the richest farm land and best growing conditions
- * Less than 1% of our country's land area
- * Highest population density
- * 25% of Canadians live here
- * 85% to 98% of forests gone
- * 80% of wetlands gone
- * Highest diversity of plants and animal species
- * 40% of Canada's rare, threatened or endangered species

black rat snake

tulip tree



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sassafras

Carolinian Leaf Hunt

Rare and unusual trees grow right along roadsides in parts of Carolinian Canada.

A leaf collection can be a unique souvenir of these sightings. Bring a tree field guide and a book with newspaper to press your leaves. Staff at nature centres and some tourist booths can guide you to local specimens. First collect leaves of common trees like sugar maple, beech, red oak and white pine.

Then start your search for rare trees that live only in Carolinian habitats. If you can collect leaves of tulip-tree, sassafras and flowering dogwood, you are an excellent leaf hunter. The Carolinian trees below are more of a challenge:

red mulberry	Chinquapin oak
cucumber magnolia	pin oak
pawpaw	pignut hickory
kentucky coffee-tree	mockernut hickory
hop-tree	black gum
American chestnut	Ohio buckeye
hackberry	big shellbark hickory
blue ash	Hill's oak
swamp white oak	

Fantastic Fake Flowers

Flowering dogwoods are tricky plants.

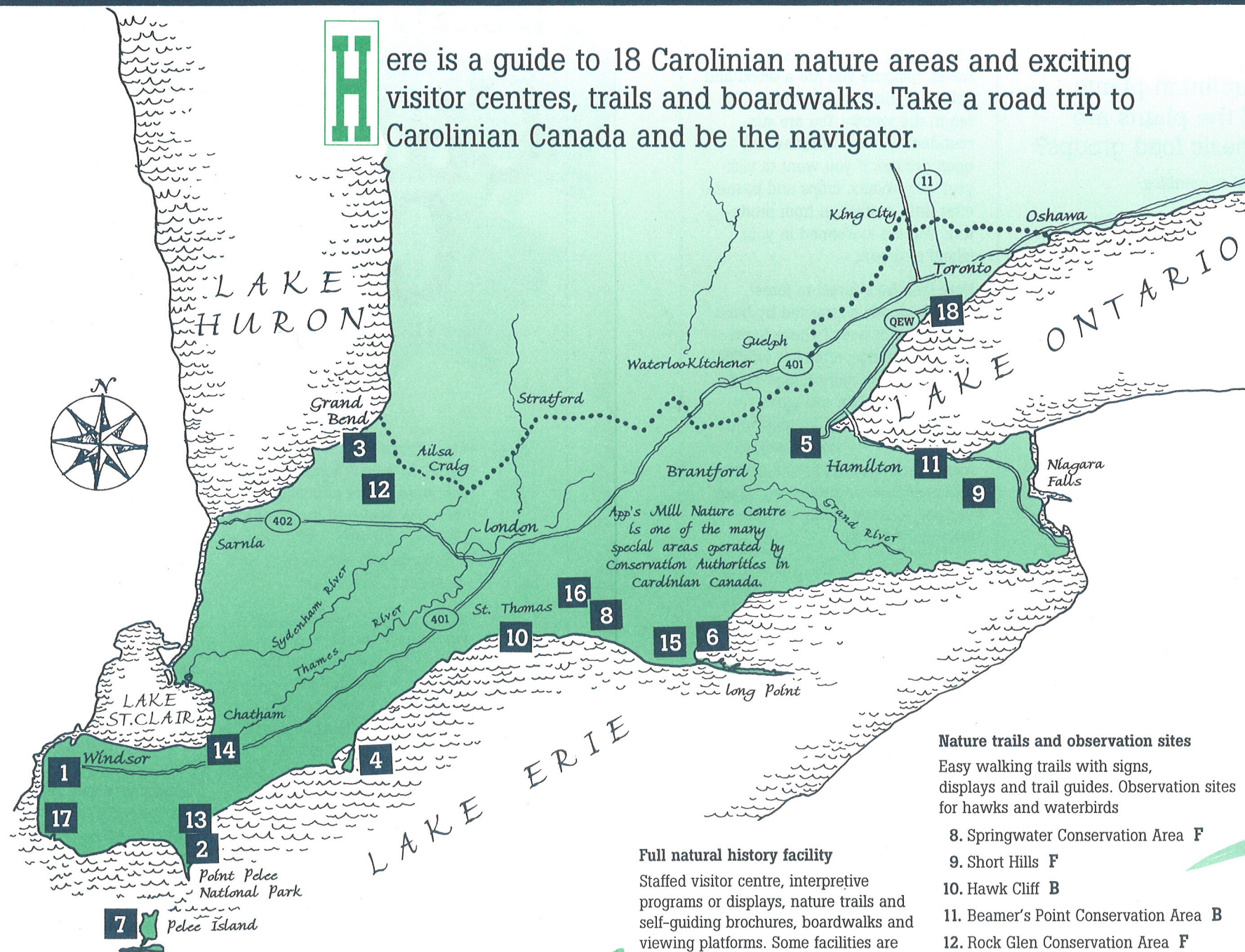
In the spring these trees seem to grow dozens of white flowers, each the size of a young person's palm. But the flowers are phoney. The real flowers are small green clumps. These clumps are ringed by showy white leaves, pretending to be petals. These leaves attract our eyes as well as insects that pollinate the real flowers.

Watch for flowering dogwood in May near places like Burlington, Paris, London and Parkhill. Or for the best show drive to the sandy lands further south. In areas around Simcoe, for example, you can see flowering dogwoods lining some roadsides for kilometres.

flowering dogwood

Nature along the Way

Here is a guide to 18 Carolinian nature areas and exciting visitor centres, trails and boardwalks. Take a road trip to Carolinian Canada and be the navigator.



Habitat or Happening

F Carolinian forest	P Prairie and savannah
M Marsh and swamp	B Bird migration site

Full natural history facility

Staffed visitor centre, interpretive programs or displays, nature trails and self-guiding brochures, boardwalks and viewing platforms. Some facilities are available and open year-round – call in advance of your trip.

1. Ojibway Prairie Heritage Parks and Provincial Nature Reserve **P F**
2. Point Pelee National Park **B M F**
3. Pinery Provincial Park **P F**
4. Rondeau Provincial Park **B M F**
5. Royal Botanical Gardens **B M F**
6. Backus Woods, Backus Conservation Education Centre and Long Point Bird Observatory **F B**
7. Pelee Island Heritage Centre and Provincial Nature Reserves **F B**

Nature trails and observation sites

Easy walking trails with signs, displays and trail guides. Observation sites for hawks and waterbirds

8. Springwater Conservation Area **F**
9. Short Hills **F**
10. Hawk Cliff **B**
11. Beamer's Point Conservation Area **B**
12. Rock Glen Conservation Area **F**

Nature trails with boardwalk or viewing platform

Wetland boardwalk with viewing platform. Viewing tower or blind for watching hawks or waterbirds such as ducks, geese or swans.

13. Hillman Marsh Conservation Area **B M**
14. St. Clair Marsh National Wildlife Area **B M**
15. Big Creek National Wildlife Area **B M**
16. Aylmer Wildlife Agreement Area **B**
17. Holiday Beach **F B**
18. High Park, Toronto **P**

spiny softshell turtle

Carolinian Forest

Carolinian forests can be tall, lush and crammed with a variety of plants and animals. You can find maple and beech trees mixed up with sassafras, chestnut and tulip-trees. Tulip-trees are the tallest trees in eastern North America, reaching higher than 35 metres.

Southern katydids call from the branches. Rare prothonotary warblers, Carolina wrens, and red-bellied woodpeckers live in tree holes. In dry sandy areas you can find more than a dozen different oaks and hickories along with sassafras and hackberry. On the ground eastern moles, badgers and hognose snakes go about their daily rounds as predators.

Marshes and Swamps

Carolinian Canada has some of the top marshes in the provinces. Lurking among the cattails, lilies and aquatic plants are the king rail, Fowler's toad and spiny softshell turtle. Watching them could be bald eagles.

Prairie and Savannah

Natural grasslands and prairie habitat were once common in Carolinian Canada. Fire naturally keeps these habitats alive by keeping woody plants and most trees out. The tallgrass prairies are home to rare wildflowers and endangered species like slender bush clover and Karner blue and frosted elfin butterflies. Where trees get a natural foothold, habitats called oak savannahs are created. Oak savannahs in Pinery Provincial Park and Walpole Island Indian Reserve are probably the largest in North America.

Bird Migration

The Great Lakes in Carolinian Canada are both barriers for some birds on migration and magnets for others. Ducks, geese and tundra swans are drawn to the marshes. Shorebirds head for mudflats and sandy shores. Hawks move along the north shores in the fall and south shores in the spring to avoid a lake crossing. Warblers, thrushes and scores of other migrants funnel along points, sand spits and islands to save energy on their way north and south.

common egret