Layers of the Forest

The **canopy** is the tallest layer of the forest and can reach heights of 100 feet in Maryland. It receives the most sunlight and wind. The **understory** extends from about 15-20ft above ground to just below the canopy. Immature and fully grown shade-loving trees grow here. The **shrub** layer extends from about 1 foot off the ground to the understory. Sapling trees, and many different kinds of spring and early summer flowering shrubs are found here. The **forest floor** is composed of two sub-layers: the herbaceous and ground layers. Ferns, wildflowers, decomposing leaves and animals, along with fungi and insects; all help to create new soil. A **deciduous forest** is created over time through a process called succession.

**Yellow Poplar, American Sycamore, White Oak, Black Walnut, American Beech, Chestnut Oak, Black Cherry, Willow Oak, White Pine, Sweet Gum, Pignut Hickory, Black Gum**

**River Birch, Red Maple, Sassafras, American Holly, Pitch Pine, Black Locust, Box Elder, Virginia Pine, Pin Cherry, Common Persimmon, Chinkapin Oak**

**Downy Serviceberry, Mountain Laurel, Swamp Azalea, Staghorn Sumac, American Dogwood, Eastern Redbud, Pawpaw, Maple-leaved Viburnum, Devils-walkingstick, Ironwood**

**Cinnamon Fern, Huckleberry, New York Fern, May-apple, Pink Lady's Slipper, Jack-n-the-Pulpit, Skunk Cabbage, Pincushion Moss, Chicken Mushroom, Poison Oak, Virginia Creeper**

**NATURE NOTE:**
The layers of plants in a forest provide different areas for animals to live in, called a habitat.