



## Spring

Starting in mid to late April, and continuing through the end of June, we see a wide variety of birds migrating through the woods: redwings, warblers, ducks, indigo buntings, rose-breasted grosbeaks, herons, eagles, orioles, sandhill cranes and more.

The first blossoms are hepatica, while snow and ice is still on the ground, followed quickly by bloodroot and wild ginger, all covering huge swaths of the forest floor. Then come the may apples, Dutchman's breeches, violets, columbine. In early May, when it's cool and it rains, we harvest morel mushrooms. Blossoms abound on the cherry and pagoda dog-wood trees.

Spring in the prairie is equally stunning, with new growth, early blooming wildflowers, and nesting birds. The bluebirds return, and start to raise their families.



## Summer

By early July, the leaf canopy in the woods is thick and the woodland flowers diminish. Walking the paths is like a stroll through a natural cathedral.

Summer is when the prairie is perhaps at its finest. Wide swaths of blue vervain and yellow goldenrod stand shoulder to shoulder as far as you can see. The path edges are rimmed with entire gardens of black-eyed susans. Look closely and you'll find Indian paintbrush and other more exotic prairie flowers. And the great prairies grasses—little bluestem and Indian grass—make a home for hundreds of birds and critters.

The creek below the prairie is a favorite stopping place for herons and ducks and hawks. Their shadows cross the prairie as they pass over the rippling grasses.



## Fall

The fall colors peak sometime between early October and early November. Our towering maple trees turn a bright yellow. Giant, aged oaks turn red and orange. Wild raspberries edge the trails. Woodland ferns and mosses flourish in the cool, moist shade of the forest. White frost asters sweep across the prairie.

As the leaves fall, the birds' nests that were hidden all summer become visible—little wrens' nests, giant hawks' nests. The warblers pass through again, on their way south for the winter.

Squirrels and chipmunks hoard the walnuts and hickory nuts that fall from the trees. Wild turkeys and pheasants burst into raucous flight when surprised by a passing hiker. Our woodland snakes (none poisonous) bask in the season's waning sunlight.



## Winter

Some years it snows a lot. Some less so. But we seem to always get enough to enjoy snow-shoeing or cross country skiing through the woods and around the prairie.

Hawks circle overhead, looking out with a sharp eye for small critters destined to become a tasty meal. Deer take cover in the woods, almost as if they are aware of the approaching hunting season.

The creek freezes, thaws, and then freezes for good. Cardinals strut their stark red against snow-covered trees. Nuthatches, chickadees, goldfinches, woodpeckers and sparrows crowd at the feeders.

There's something about a night-time winter sky that is especially clear, especially crystal. The milky way crowds the center of the sky—a high-flung ribbon of stars.



## Nature Trail Guide

Trails are open year-round for the enjoyment of all lodge guests.



### MAPLE WOOD LODGE

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The path on the high ridge above the creek provides great creek views in the winter, but the leaves obscure the view in the other months. This path, in particular, is loaded with **spring wildflowers**—blankets and blankets of them. Wild ginger, dutchman's breeches, may apples, wild geraniums, hepatica, yellow and blue violets, bloodroot, trout lily, wild phlox, columbine and the rare showy orchis.

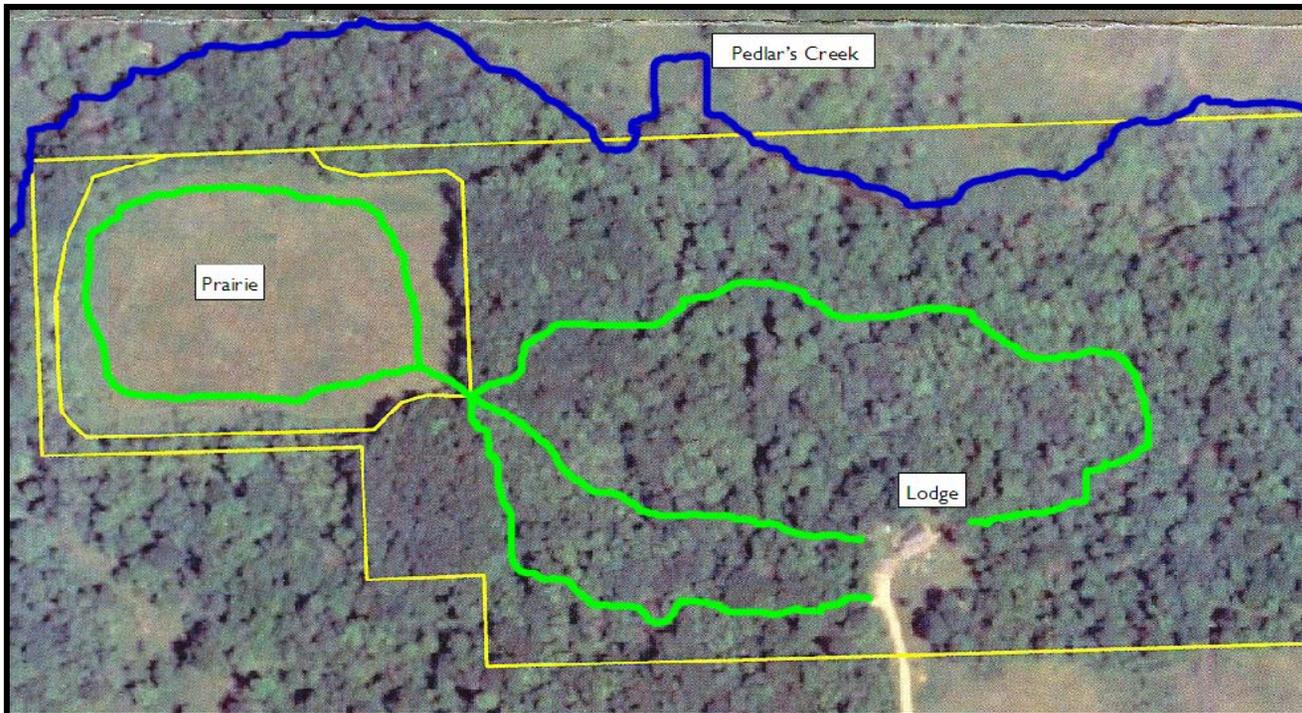
The show starts in early spring, and continues into late June. This is also the most amazing path in the fall, with the high canopy of yellow, orange and red leaves.



There's no other flower even remotely like the "jack-in-the-pulpit".

It appears shortly after the last melting of snow and ice, and before the advent of any hot weather.

In the fall, the stem is covered with bright red berries.



This photo was taken on the most direct path from the Lodge back to the Prairie.

The tall maples turn flaming yellow and orange, before dropping mountains of colorful leaves on the forest trails.



See our website for a detailed listing of birds, plants and trees found at Maple Wood Lodge

The path around the **prairie** is 1/2 mile and well worth it. A bench at the top of the prairie is perfectly placed for watching the sunset. Look for the bluebirds which inhabit the houses from mid-spring to late summer.

The prairie restoration began in 2004. Each year, we see a healthier, more robust variety of prairie grasses and wildflowers, and a greater variety of birds, such as indigo buntings and goldfinch, that feed on the seeds and nest among the grasses.

The most direct path from the lodge to the prairie is lined with **mature maples**, which we tap in the spring for maple syrup.

They can only be tapped on days when the temperature is below freezing at night, and above freezing during the day. The fluctuation in temperature creates a kind of pumping action that brings sap up from the roots. It takes forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.



Three varieties of woodpeckers are seen year-round, including this red-belly, as well as hairy and-downy. Red-headed woodpeckers and flickers arrive in the spring and stay through summer. Pileated woodpeckers make an occasional visit.