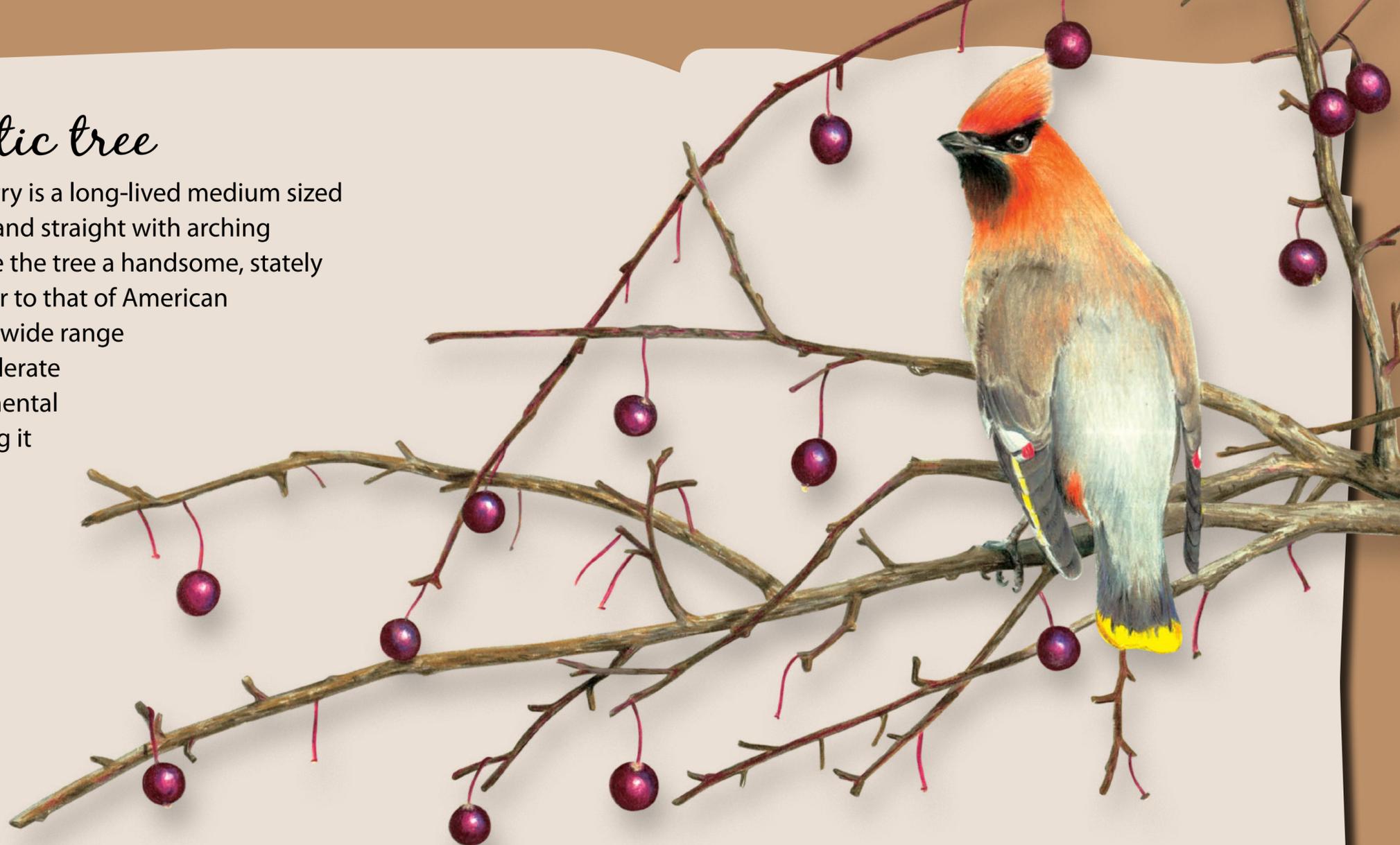


A majestic tree

Common Hackberry is a long-lived medium sized tree, growing tall and straight with arching branches that give the tree a handsome, stately appearance similar to that of American elm. It grows on a wide range of soils and can tolerate stressful environmental conditions, making it a great choice for a city street tree or landscape specimen in your front yard or garden.



Hackberry

Common
(*Celtis occidentalis*)

Corky bark



Dark purple,
edible berries

Edible berries

Native to southern Ontario, Common Hackberry is easily identified by its corky bark and dark purple berries that are present on the tree in the fall. The berries are edible but mostly out of reach by humans, making them a tasty treat for many birds, like the Cedar Waxwing shown above.



Buckthorn
seeds



Invasive woody shrubs

Common and glossy buckthorn are two invasive woody shrubs introduced from Europe that are wreaking havoc in Ontario's natural areas. The plants produce large seed crops that are readily eaten and distributed by birds. Because buckthorn can grow in a wide range of conditions, it easily out-competes native plants in their natural environment and dominates the area.



Buckthorn
flower

Common & glossy Buckthorn

(*Rhamnus cathartica* &
Rhamnus frangula)

Please do not welcome...

Buckthorn establishes readily in backyard gardens and along hedgerows where birds often gather. Homeowners often welcome buckthorn into their gardens and maintain it as a yard tree not knowing how destructive it can be to the nearby natural area. The easiest way to remove buckthorn is to pull it out by the roots when it is a young plant. Otherwise, cutting it down once it is full grown only results in many stump sprouts and new trees.



Illustrations by Tracy Bithell Riley





Large brown & white raptor

Osprey have a white head and prominent dark eye streaks.
Adults weigh about 1.5 kg (3.5 lbs).



Long, narrow wings

Their wingspan can be as wide as 1.8 m (6 ft).

Osprey

(Pandion haliaetus)



Nests

The loss of traditional nesting sites such as large super-canopy white pine and dead standing trees near lakes, rivers and wetlands due to human induced landscape change have caused osprey to find alternate nesting sites. Utility poles along roadways and recreational areas such as the one at Snyder's Flats has become a favourite nesting site for them to rear their young as they adapt to a changing environment. However, lack of suitable nesting sites remains a limiting factor for the species.



Zygodactyl feet

(Two toes facing forward and two toes facing backward) which they use to catch the fish they eat by plunging into the water feet first.





The Beaver is the largest rodent in North America with adults weighing between 15 to 35 kg (33 to 77 lbs).

Semi-aquatic

Beavers are adapted to the water with their flat paddle-shaped tail and large, webbed hind feet. Their eyes are covered by a membrane which allows them to see underwater and their nostrils and ears become sealed while submerged. They secrete an oil to waterproof its fur and have a thick fat layer to protect them from the cold.



American Beaver

(Castor canadensis)

The "Busy Beaver"

Felling and gnawing trees is more than just a hobby, it is a full time job. Beavers are herbivores that will eat several parts of a tree including the leaves, bark, twigs and roots. When a beaver fells a tree, they will use a large portion of it as a food source and also to create or repair a nearby beaver lodge or dam. Not many other animals are capable of adapting and re-engineering their environment to suit their own needs the way a beaver can.

Lodges at Snyder's Flats

Several domelike beaver homes, called lodges, are present in the ponds at Snyder's Flats. The lodges are constructed with branches and mud and are home to extended beaver families.

Impact on the trees

At Snyder's Flats beavers have killed several trees along the shoreline of the ponds and the Grand River. The GRCA has taken action to protect some existing mature trees using wire caging. Other, less desirable species of trees such as Manitoba maple have been left unprotected.





Pond Features *Snyder's Flats*

Shoreline habitat

The shoreline of a river or pond is the most productive area for fish and other aquatic life. These areas are shallow enough for plants to grow which in turn provide food and habitat for fish and other wildlife. The finger-like projections of land that extend into the pond area are designed to increase the amount of shoreline as well as slow down wind gusts that travel across the pond from the west, leading to increased wave action and shoreline erosion.

Fish species

Fish that live in the ponds today include largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, yellow perch, black crappie, pumpkinseed and many species of minnows.



Largemouth Bass



Sand & Gravel

Beginning in 1979, the GRCA worked with Preston Sand & Gravel to extract gravel from Snyder's Flats.

Following gravel extraction, rehabilitation focused on enhancing aquatic habitat along the Grand River and creating additional shoreline habitat in the area.

The construction of the ponds present on the property today is a result of that work which created an additional 4,900 meters of shoreline habitat.





The Trickster

In native lore, coyotes are known as the "Trickster". Although curious, coyotes are non-confrontational and do not generally pose a threat to human safety. They are mainly crepuscular in nature, meaning they are most active during twilight hours at dawn and dusk.

Coyotes can bark softly, growl, howl and sing in a chorus. They communicate with eleven different sounds, as well as with body language and scent. The scientific name for coyote is *Canis latrans*, which means barking dog in Latin.



Coyote

(*Canis latrans*)

Dens

Coyotes prefer secluded locations for den sites, and often choose areas near stream banks or ravines. Their den sites are difficult to locate and it is not unusual for a coyote to have several den sites in an attempt to avoid detection. The female selects the den site but both parents rear the young. Naturalized areas like Snyder's Flats provide excellent habitat for coyotes.

Diet

Coyotes are opportunistic and highly adaptable animals, taking advantage of almost any available food source. In an urban environment one of their favourite meals is garbage. The coyote's natural diet consists mainly of small rodents and carrion, as well as birds, eggs, snakes, turtles, fish and plants. All of these favourite meals are abundant in the various habitats found at Snyder's Flats.

