

BEEBE MEADOW

Beebe Meadow is a seven acre parcel of extremely diverse parkland maintained as conservation land. The grass and wildflower meadow is enhanced with a variety of shrubs and a tree border. This combination of vegetation creates so-called "edges" and a habitat diversity that supports a variety of wildlife.

The diversity of the meadow is compounded by the three distinct zones of vegetation. The zones are a result of varying soils and are indicated on the map by the letters A, B and C. Zone A is made up of relatively dry soils. It is an upland meadow that has probably been filled with soil removed from developments in the neighborhood. Species growing in Zone A include milkweed, yarrow, goldenrod, clover, and purple vetch, as well as several types of grasses. The tree border in this area is made up of Red Cedar, White Pine, Pin Cherry, and Quaking Aspen.

Zone B is a moister area and this is reflected in the type of vegetation that is found there: Silky Dogwood, Arrowwood, Red Maple and Green Ash.

Zone C occurs beyond the northern border of the meadow. This zone is made up of wetland and is a right-of-way for the Sudbury Aqueduct. There is a wide degree of diversity within this zone also. The majority of the zone is a bog, with patches of marsh and a Red Maple swamp in the area adjacent to Cartwright Road. The plants that grow in this zone require wet soils and include cattail, skunk cabbage, grasses, ferns and sedges.

In New England, land like this becomes forest under natural conditions. The land in Beebe Meadow was once totally cleared for agriculture. After it was no longer farmed, grasses and small shrubs grew up in the area. Now annual mowing keeps the meadow in this early successional stage. If mowing were to be discontinued, the process of natural succession would take over. First would come shrubs and then the sun-loving tree species such as White Pine, Aspen, and Poplar would grow. Notice that these are some of the species that are found in the tree border. This is because the border has not been mowed and the more advanced successional stage has been allowed to grow. The sun-loving species cast a shade that does not allow their own seedlings to survive, so the seedlings of shade-loving plants such as Maple, Oak, Ash, or Hemlock thrive. The trees which can replace themselves in the shade become the dominant, or climax, species.

The Friends of Beebe Meadow is a local group which helps to preserve the meadow. They asked Naturalist Charles Roth of the Massachusetts Audubon Society to evaluate the Meadow's care, and have encouraged the Town of implement his recommendations. The Friends of Beebe Meadow have provided a small sign and flowers to mark the area.

Beebe Meadow offers an excellent opportunity for nature walks. The diversity of plant and animal life is exceptional. By walking on the paths provided and not through the meadow itself, damage to the vegetation will be prevented.