

Habitats on The Quarry Farm: The Woodland

My earliest memory of The Quarry Farm is of a crisp autumn afternoon in the late 1940's, soon after my parents purchased the property. They and our grandmother had come to a grove on the southern end to gather black walnuts. While they filled gunny sacks with their pungent treasure, my brothers and I coasted down a nearby slope on our Red Flyer wagon. That golden afternoon was a special introduction to one of the native trees on The Quarry Farm.

Many years ago, much of The Quarry Farm was pasture and cropland. In 2026, though, most of it is woodland consisting of roughly three areas: the old river valley south of the quarry that runs to the property line; the upland that overlooks the valley, extends eastward to the prairie, and runs between the stream and Road M-7; and the Riley Creek floodplain that lies all along the north side.



Bloodroot is one of the earliest Ohio wildflowers that thrive in the woodlands.

Learning to know our native trees and to understand how they fit into the ecosystem is an intriguing study. Some species prefer to live beside or near the stream, including towering old cottonwoods, sycamores, Ohio buckeyes, hackberries, and black willows. On higher ground but not far away are the black walnut trees, wild cherry, pignut hickory, chinkapin oaks and swamp white oaks, basswoods, Kentucky coffee trees, wild plums, Osage oranges (perhaps food for giant sloths once upon a time), and honey locusts, box elders, black maples and sugar maples.

The woodland canopy and undergrowth offer food, protection, and nesting sites for dozens of bird species, making for exhilarating springtime bird hikes. The annual stopover by migratory warblers is especially enjoyable. When the little birds settle into the trees

to hunt for insects, they twitter frantically and rustle the leaves in their agitation. Since the reintroduction of wild turkeys several decades ago, flocks have found a bountiful haven among our native trees. They appear rarely and can vanish instantly, but gobbling can give them away.

We have high hopes that our woodland will hold up in the face of environmental stressors like weather extremes, diseases, and infestations. Damage by the recent brutal winds has left the ground even more littered than usual. Like everyone else, we lost our ash trees to the Emerald Ash Borer some time ago. The Amur bush honeysuckle that was supposed to feed wildlife has become a scourge. Its pretty red berries have proven to be mere junk food, and the bushes develop dense foliage that blocks sunlight, leaving the soil bare underneath. We have been thankful for dedicated volunteers like David Seitz. He has singlehandedly uprooted acres of honeysuckle. The resulting brush piles have been a boon to wildlife.

During the coming year, we plan to enhance the woodland habitat's potential by planting hundreds more native trees in the open spaces.

—The Gardener at The Quarry Farm



The American hackberry tree is native to North America. This "Mama Tree" is the primary food source for the Hackberry Emporor Butterfly.



Eastern Whip-poor-will in an open woodland area (Photo by Deb Weston)

Spring 2026 Programs & Events

Dress for the weather, including good walking shoes, and meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora. There is no fee to participate unless noted otherwise. However, tax-deductible donations are appreciated.

Native Pathways Plant Sale

Saturday, May 9, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. & Sunday, May 10, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Want to add natural beauty to your landscape with healthy native plants? The green growers from Native Pathways, Williamstown, will set up shop here at The Quarry Farm for the weekend. The Ohio-sourced plant species available will include Butterflyweed, Swamp Milkweed, Common Milkweed, Dense Blazing Star, Button Blazing Star, Compass Plant, Prairie Dock, Wild Blue Indigo, Wild White Indigo, Big Blue Stem, and more. Native shrub species will include Gray Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, Persimmon, and more. Cash, Venmo, and card accepted.

Cream Tea with Kathleen's Kitchen

Sunday, May 10, 2 p.m.

(Register at <https://www.katsadventureswithtea.com/event-details/cream-tea-at-quarry-farm>)

Shop the Native Plant Sale then enjoy a spot of tea. Kathleen will be serving 2 varieties of tea that highlight the use of plants native to this region of Ohio. We will discuss safe foraging techniques and how to determine which plants are suitable for teas. Accompanying our tea will be freshly baked classic scones, Devinstyle cream and homemade jam. **Cost: \$15 (\$5 from every ticket will be donated to The Quarry Farm)**

Spring Bird Migration Hike

Saturday, May 16, 9–11 a.m.

Birds are everywhere, all the time, doing fascinating things. Right now they are moving from their southerly winter retreats to spring nesting grounds and summer homes. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars as we document the many species of birds that migrate to and through Northwest Ohio. All recorded species will be submitted to eBird.

Make a Leaf Stepper

Thursday, June 4, 1–3 p.m.

(Register through the Putnam County Educational Service Center at <https://forms.gle/VDHkLTcMcJ5wEhxE9>)

Calling all students in grades K-12, and their parent, grandparent, guardian, or adult family member: Meet in the Seitz Family Pavilion to create your own garden path stepper using leaves from the gardens and trails. Limited to 15 student-adult pairs.



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Do you have questions, want to schedule an outing or workshop for your group or keep up with what's happening here? Email thequarryfarm@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and visit www.thequarryfarm.org or call 567-376-0705.

Donations to The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a 501(c)(3) public charity, are tax-deductible.



Mission Statement

It is our goal and mission to provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio and to interact with their fellow inhabitants in a sustainable manner.



A Blue-winged Teal stopped by the quarry wetland. (Photo by Deb Weston)

The Quarry Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication for supporters of The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a nonprofit organization in Pandora, Ohio.

On the cover: Putnam County students made hiking sticks and accessorized with invasive Amur honeysuckle and Dame's Rocket during the Spring 2025 Putnam ESC Camp.

All photographs printed in this newsletter were taken on The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm.

www.thequarryfarm.org



Under One Big Sky

What with incredibly cold winter temperatures forecast for the start of 2026, our schedule of events relied on indoor warmth. On January 22, a few of The Quarry Farm board of directors members enjoyed a tea in honor of board president Laura's birthday and to make bark-masks in preparation for the February 16 Bark Mask Workshop at the Putnam County Educational Service Center in Ottawa. The workshop was filled with excited families who created art while learning how to identify some of our Northwest Ohio trees in winter by their coats.

The summer kitchen at the south end of the pollinator gardens was warm this winter, especially on Fridays. As Steve the baker is kneading bread there much of the week, he opened the doors at the end of the work week for people to stock up on fresh breads, bagels, scones, and French macaron. Coffee and tea were at the ready, as were chairs to sit and talk. The Kitchen has become a small but lovely gathering space to exchange ideas, view local artwork, and relax before or after hikes on the trails. Fridays at the Kitchen will continue until April 17, with doors open every Friday from 7–10 a.m. and 12–5 p.m.

If it seems like we have been sharing lots of remembrances recently, we have. The animals that come to the farm animal sanctuary do live out their lives here, helping teach humans about their needs, emotions, and intelligence, as well as their lives before. This winter, we said goodbye to three of our oldest and dearest friends: Beatrice the pot-bellied pig; Nemo the big, big pig; and Winston the Virginia Opossum. Their absence is keenly felt, especially when we look out at the Eastern White Pine in the paddock that Nemo loved to sprawl below. Advisory Board Member Bonnie Brooks delivered a card—a special piece hand-painted by her daughter Hannah—in honor of Nemo and Winston. It is displayed in the summer kitchen, a treasure and reminder.

While we mourn the loss of these education ambassadors, it is a comfort to know that they lived their lives out in peace. And it seems that when they pass, someone else is in need of sanctuary. Sometimes, it's several someones. This month, a young pot-bellied pig, two goats, and five hens moved in. More about Nugget on the next page.



Board members created bark masks (above) in preparation for teaching a mask-making workshop. Below right, Walt Cusick tries on the bark mask that he made at Putnam County ESC.



Hannah Lugibihl painted a portrait in memory of Nemo and Winston.

Resident Spotlight: Nugget

Gertie was the first pot-bellied pig that came to live here in the farm animal sanctuary. Her person had died, leaving Gertie and another pot-belly behind. The other pig was euthanized due to poor condition, leaving Gertie confused and afraid. Although we had decided to not accept pigs because they can be escape artists if bored, that same intelligence that looks for stimulation on the other side of the fence made us fall in love with Gertie. That was in 2012.

Beatrice, no longer the cute little piglet* that her person adopted, was surrendered into our care soon after. Since then, these four acres have become home to more pigs: Bob Barker and Alphonse, a probable father and son who were left to freeze to death, one in a barrel and the other in a frozen trench; Sophie, a scarred diva who was so overweight that folds of skin obscured her eyes; Carlton and Clive, one abandoned in Bowling Green and the other at a Findlay canoe launch; and tiny Nemo who arrived here with a North Carolina tattoo in her ear, road rash, and a leg fracture and, in the course of 11 years, grew from a tiny piglet to a gentle 700-pound love with the emotions of a three-year-old human. They won over visiting school groups and families with their enthusiasm for juicy apples, peanuts, pumpkins, and belly-rubs.

The ninth pig to join the peaceable kingdom arrived less than a month ago and was surrendered due to family illness. Unlike the other eight, Nugget was well-cared for and loved, and it shows. This squealy little fawn-colored pot-belly is confident in his need for food, toys, and cuddling, although that last is usually fleeting. No sooner than Nugget has rolled over for a scratch than he is up and off to the next curiosity. Now that he is familiar with the donkeys, goats, and chickens, and knows to let the geese have first dibs on everything, Nugget is exploring Spring's warming soil and growing grass. One of his favorite new pastimes is to take a running leap into the goats' breakfast hay, roll onto his back, and wriggle his hooves in the air.

***Babies grow! As Easter approaches, please don't buy ducklings and chicks without good intentions for their continued care. The same goes for puppies, kittens, bunnies, and every animal that is frequently gifted or bought on a whim. Everything has a right to live and be treated with compassion.**



Nugget, like most pigs, is intelligent and inquisitive. The day he arrived, he checked out his new home, including the donkeys' Jollyball in the pasture.

Thank you...

- ...to Melissa Basinger at the Putnam County ESC for this year's art-in-nature opportunities.
- ...to Martha Erchenbrecher and Rita Seitz for assisting with the Bark Mask Workshop.
- ...to Jacob Hermiller for bringing his excavating equipment out in the cold to bury Nemo.
- ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal.
- ...to Debbie Lieber, Deb Weston and David Smith for monitoring winter bird population.

Monetary Donations:

- Bruce Coburn
- Leticia Regalado
- Cathy Rupert



A male cardinal sings in the February warm sun. (Photo by Deb Weston)



Six years into The Quarry Farm's 10-year goal of removing invasive plant species like Amur bush Honeysuckle that crowd out native trees and wildflowers, David Seitz has cleared so much of these invasives that it is time to plant trees that will benefit native wildlife. This April, we are planting 850 trees, including species of oak, hickory, serviceberry, buckeye, plum, persimmon, and viburnum. We will supply gloves, tools, and refreshments.

Please email thequarryfarm@gmail.com or call 567-376-0705 if you, your friends, family, Scouts, classmates, would like to help be part of this exciting project. Let us know of any day April 12–May 3 that works for you.