

Favorite Places

HARMS WOODS

Glenview, IL
On Harms Road
between Golf Rd and Old Orchard Rd



One of my most frequented getaways is the Skokie Division of the Forest Preserve System. Cook County has some of the most extensive forest preserves of any metropolitan area. Chicagoans are lucky to have this mini wilderness in their backyards.

Harms Woods is a particularly lush and rich section of the Skokie Division. Each season is distinct with its own beauty and charm. Visit often to watch the progression of wildflowers and nature's cycles.

North Branch Restoration Project:
The Cook County Forest Preserve partners with stewardship groups to maintain these beautiful woodlands. Invasives removal, habitat restoration, education, and clean-up are just some of the tasks. To volunteer contact northbranch@comcast.net



GETAWAY FOR A DAY

Harms Woods are located on a north-western tributary of the Chicago River. These are open woods with gentle rolling terrain. The forest preserve is bordered by residential and commercial areas so there are lots of paths for walking, biking and horseback riding. There are picnic shelters, portable toilets, and lawns maintained for activities and pets. The trails are short (couple miles) but Harms Woods is connected to forest preserves to the north and south allowing for long day hikes or bike trips. The creek is the life-blood of the forest, winding through savanna, upland forest, and flat woods.



NATURE IN THE CITY

The soil is a mixture of clay, silt, and sand, perhaps deposited by a melting glacier or less dramatically by periodic flooding of the creek. The rich soil grows some of our best trees and shrubs, including: red oak, swamp white oak, shagbark hickory, basswood, silver maple, ironwood, crabapple, hawthorn, serviceberry, bladderwort, dogwood, and witch hazel.



The wildflowers of Spring are the main attraction. Just about every woodland flower found in Cook County is represented. There are vast stands of trout lily, spring beauty, trillium, toothwort, wild geranium, hepatica, mayapple, Solomon's plume, bellwort, and jack-in-the-pulpit. Other gems that can be seen by the observant are anemone, wild sarsaparilla, lousewort, and blue cohosh. Crabapples and serviceberries also add to the colorful spring pallet.

However, this area is beautiful in all seasons. Black cohosh, squawroot, and irises bloom in the summer. The autumn foliage provides a brilliant show as the witch hazels perfume the air. In winter snowfall gives the woods a fairy tale appearance and makes for an invigorating hike. Cardinals, robins, and sparrows greet visitors with bright songs. Other easy to spot fauna include: woodpeckers, raccoons, deer and ducks. Have fun.

