

Oak - Ash Woodland

State Rank S3

woodlands usually develop over bedrock that is not strongly acidic.

Community Description

These partial canopy deciduous woodlands are dominated by red oak and ironwood (the latter often as subcanopy). Basswood is an indicator species. Sugar maple may be codominant at some sites. The herb layer features species typical of somewhat enriched sites, such as Venus' looking-glass, herb Robert, round-lobed hepatica, plantain-leaved pussytoes, and wild-licorice, among an often dense cover of graminoids. Marginal wood-fern is characteristic of the herb layer. Vegetation may be patchy, developing in pockets among the rocks, or more continuous along upper slopes and ridges.

Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occur on upper hill slopes and ridges or on talus slopes, often with some southerly exposure. Soils are thin and very well drained. The exposure and thin soils create dry conditions. These

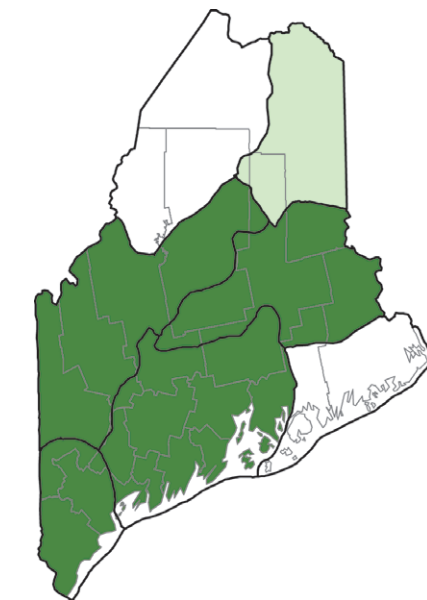
Diagnostics

Ironwood is well represented and may be codominant with red oak. Sugar maple and/or basswood are present if not abundant. Some rich site indicators are present in herb layer.

Similar Types

Birch - Oak Talus Woodlands are similar but have far less ironwood, ash, and sugar maple, generally lack basswood, and have less extensive graminoid cover. Intermediates can be difficult to classify. Maple - Basswood - Ash Forests share some rich woods species but typically contain less oak and ironwood and occur on deeper, more mesic soils.

Location Map



Community is known from this Ecoregion
 Community may occur in this Ecoregion
 Bailey's Ecoregion
 County



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Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

These types are subject to fragmentation from development pressure in southern Maine. The hilltop setting of many makes them attractive as house sites, although the shallow soils generally will not support intensive residential use. Some sites were probably pastured at some time in the 1700s - 1800s but have regrown. Almost all known sites are on private land with individual ownership.

Sites that have eastern red cedar present may host the rare juniper hairstreak butterfly, which uses cedar as its larval host plant. Two other insects, the columbine dusky wing butterfly and the aureolaria seed borer moth, may have historically inhabited this community type where they used uncommon larval host plants, columbine and false foxglove, respectively.

Distribution

Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province, extending southwestward from Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small Patch

Characteristic Plants

These plants are frequently found in this community type. Those with an asterisk are often diagnostic of this community.

Canopy

Basswood*
Ironwood*
Red oak
Sugar maple
White Ash

Sapling/shrub

Beaked hazelnut
Ironwood*

Herb

Columbine
False spikenard
Fibrous-rooted sedge
Marginal woodfern
Rough-leaved ricegrass
Round-lobed hepatica
Woodland sedge*

Bryoid

Dicranum moss
Large hair-cap moss
Pincushion moss

Associated Rare Plants

Blunt-lobed woodsia
Bottlebrush grass
Douglas' knotweed
Dry land sedge
Early crowfoot
Ebony spleenwort
Fern-leaved false foxglove
Hairy wood brome-grass
Missouri rockcress
Summer grape

Associated Rare Animals

Juniper hairstreak

Examples on Conservation Lands You Can Visit

- Derry Mountain, Camden Hills State Park - Knox Co.



Ebony Spleenwort