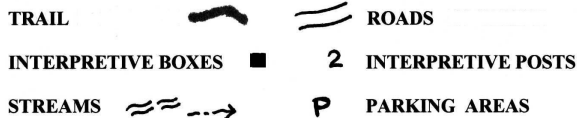
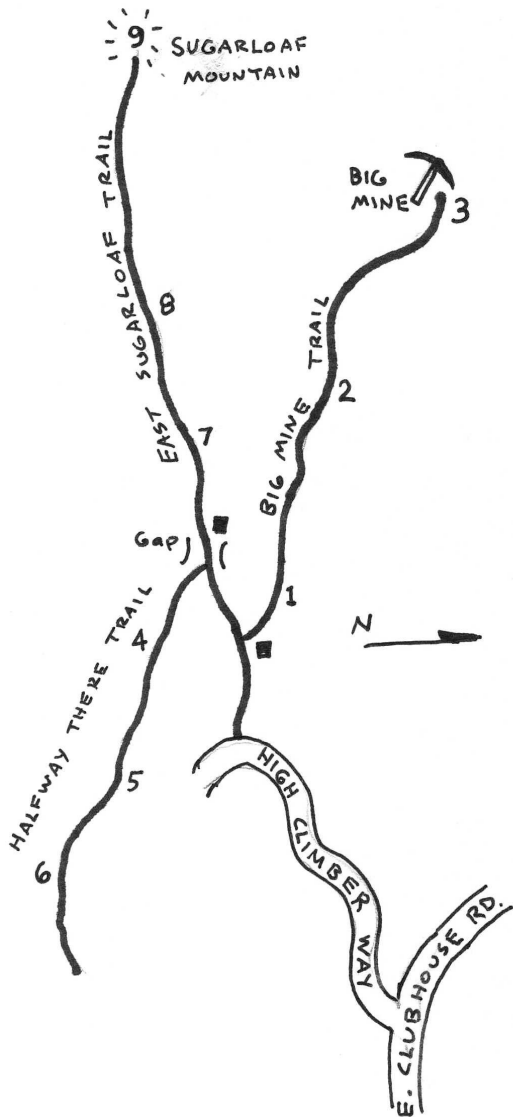


# East Sugarloaf Mtn. Trail 23

Map not to scale



## HIKING SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Carry water with you
- Stay on designated trail
- Inform a friend of your hiking plans
- Hike with another person
- Leash your pet
- Carry a cell phone with fully charged and extra battery
- Carry important medication/first aid
- Call Security or the Trust Nature Center if you need help



Balsam Mountain Trust  
Phone: (828)631-1060

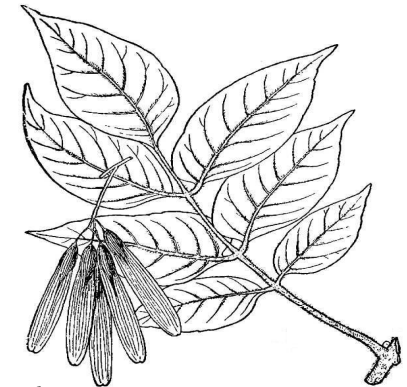
BMP Security  
Phone: (828)631-1011

## Interpretive Trail Guide

FOLLOWING NUMBERED POSTS PLACED  
ALONG TRAIL



## East Sugarloaf Mountain Trails 23 & 23A/B



White ash *Fraxinus americana*

Terrain: Old logging roads traversing ridges and slopes

Trail elevation: 580 ft. total elevation difference, all trails

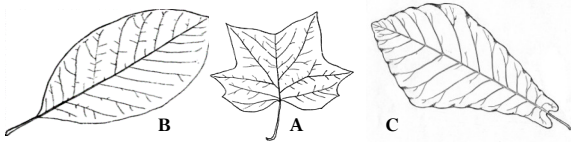
Trail length: 0.6 mi. for 23; 0.4 mi for 23A; 0.25 mile for 23B.

Trail Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous sections

### Trail 23A: Big Mine Trail

A logging road that ends at an old mine excavation. Change of elevation is slight over the 0.4 mile length.

1) The swollen growths on many black cherry trees in the vicinity are the work of the black knot fungus (*Apiosprina morbosa*). This disease affects cherries and plums, causing these galls. Spores are released from the galls in rainy spring weather, carried by wind and rain to nearby branches. Galls girdle and weaken the stem, and wood-boring insects often move into the galls to cause secondary damage. There is no cure for this disease, but removal of galls in winter will lessen the quantity of new infections in spring.



2) Three members of the magnolia family grow in the Preserve, and all can be seen within 250 ft. of this trail station. Most common is **A**, the tuliptree or yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), with its distinctive leaf shape and grayish furrowed bark. The cucumbertree, **B** (*Magnolia acuminata*), has oval leaves and brown furrowed bark and the mountain magnolia, **C** (*M. fraseri*), has leaves lobed at the base and bears smooth gray bark. Magnolia family members are among some of the most ancient of flowering plants, little changed across the fossil record.

3) Nearby is the largest of two open cut garnet mines on Sugarloaf Mtn, where rhodolite, a pinkish variety of garnet used to make abrasives, was extracted from 1900-1928. Garnet can still be seen among the fallen rocks. Visible on the cut wall is a dark layer of sulfide-rich schist which created problems in the ore separation process and decreased profitability here after 1923, when a cheaper rhodolite source entered the market.

### Trail 23B: Halfway There Trail

A ridgeline boundary trail that links Stringer Way to East Sugarloaf Trail, with 200 ft. change of elevation over 0.25 mile length

4) Look at the swollen base of the **mountain laurel** (*Kalmia latifolia*). This is a burl, but of a different origin than tree burls caused by fungi. This burl is a lignotuber, formed when the plant was in its seedling stage. Numerous dormant buds lie in wait within the lignotuber, ready to sprout when a fire or other disturbance destroys the main stem. This specialized type of burl occurs in other members of the heath family, such as rhododendron and sourwood.



5) Many uses were once gleaned from the **sassafras** (*Sassafras albidum*), the young trees seen here with furrowed brown bark. Rot-resistant wood made sturdy fence posts, aromatic sap was used for flavorings and medicine, and dried leaves were used as thickening agents in cooking (gumbo file). The female sassafras produces fruits attractive as food for many birds, and the rich yellow and orange fall colors add another reason for its use as an ornamental tree in landscaping. Some of the bygone utility of sassafras is ignored today, but this namesake of "root beer" extract endures as a common species in eastern forests.

6) The papery-barked **yellow birch** (*Betula allegheniensis*) stands out from its more numerous relatives in this area that have smooth to thick-scaled bark, the black birches (*Betula lenta*). Both types of trees have similar leaves and contain sap with a wintergreen odor. The yellow birch is slightly out of place here since it normally grows at higher elevations, or along cool slopes and streamsides. The seeds of birch are tiny and spread widely by wind. This specimen likely originated from such a ride.

### Trail 23: East Sugarloaf Mtn. Trail

Old logging road to summit of Sugarloaf Mtn; strenuous 580 ft. climb in 0.6 mi.

7) A valuable lumber is derived from **white ash** (*Fraxinus americana*), the nearby tree with evenly furrowed bark and stout, opposite-branched twigs. Strong and coarse-grained, yet lighter than hickory, the wood is used for tool handles and sports equipment, as well as furniture and paneling. It is a common tree in rich soils on the Preserve, though its future is at risk due to the spread of an exotic pest, the emerald ash borer.

8) The **alternate leaf dogwood** (*Cornus alternifolia*) is a small tree of forest understories and high elevation openings. Its leaf arrangement is unlike other dogwoods which bear paired, opposite leaves, hence the name. Notice its greenish bark and reddish twigs in winter. The layered branching pattern earn it the ornamental name of pagoda dogwood.



9) Standing at 4580 ft. elevation on the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain, the views north and south reveal the rolling, tree-covered ridges that define the southern Appalachian landscape. Where there is soil, trees quickly colonize. This small summit clearing is purposely maintained, otherwise woody growth would cover it. Absence of tree cover on some mountaintops earned them the name of "balds" in the past. Regardless of their origin, without continued woody plant disturbance balds inevitably revert to forest. Only bare rock outcrops resist such a pace of succession.

