



Ten Old Forests to Visit

Here are ten old forests you can visit. There are more beyond these, and we'd encourage you to look at the *Sierra Club Guide to the Ancient Forests of the Northeast* for a few more ideas, in Vermont and elsewhere in the northeast.

1. **Gifford Woods, Killington:** This is one of the iconic and most widely recognized old-growth forests of Vermont, even though it has a light history of sugaring, has a state highway dissecting it, and has campsites within it. Still, it is a spectacular forest with massive trees, down and standing dead wood, and lots of great understory herbs. Just get yourself to the park entrance and from there you'll find an interpretive trail through the old forest.
2. **Abbey Pond Trail and Battell Research Forest, Middlebury:** Find the Abbey Pond Trail on Route 116 in Middlebury. Ascend from there and you will find old hemlock forest on either side of the trail. If you bushwhack off trail to the south, there's more to be found in the research forest. But be warned: it's steep!
3. **Mud Pond, Greensboro:** This one is a little tricky. Look for this address: Tamarack Ranch Road, Greensboro, VT. This will be a left off of Hillcrest Road as it turns to Highlander Street in Greensboro. Turn north on this little road and keep bearing right until you come to a dead end. Here you can follow woods roads or bushwhack to the places of interest. You might want to wait until we have an in-person tour.
4. **Silver Lake Old Forest, Barnard:** This is private property but there are public trails to and through it. From the entrance to Silver Lake State Park, walk about 1/3 mile north on North Road to where a woods road leaves the paved road. This is just south of the intersection of North Road and Tower Road. Walk east along the woods road for about 3/4 mile until you see a foot trail heading off to the right. This will lead you down into the old forest. Keep your eyes out for fungi!

5. **Granville Gulf, Granville:** Much of this area may contain old forest. One area that is easily accessible is found thus: On Route 100 in Granville, find the intersection with Plunkton Road. Just south of that, on the west side of Route 100, there is a pulloff. Park there, jump out of your car, cross a small stream to the west, and before you know it you will encounter some very large trees and old forest characteristics. But hike up to the top of the ridge. Maple, ash, hemlock, spruce, and more. A spectacular site.
6. **Wilmarth Woods, Addison:** This is right along the trail up to Snake Mountain. Park at the Snake Mountain parking area, and then walk along the road to the trailhead. Follow the trail uphill. Just a short distance up, you will see the TNC Wilmarth Woods Natural Area sign. Anytime after that, but before the trail takes a sharp left up to the mountain, you can wander off to the right (south) into the old forest. See fabulous old sugar maple, ash, and shagbark hickory, along with down trees and snags throughout. Note deer-browsed regeneration.
7. **Williams Woods, Charlotte:** Find Williams Woods Natural Area, ~ 5950 Greenbush Road, Charlotte. Park alongside the road and follow the trails into and through the woods. Immediately you will see signs of past blowdowns, plus large living hemlocks and white pines, and later along the trail, some very large and old (300+ years) white, bur, and swamp white oaks. The diversity of tree species here is remarkable, as is the diversity of shrubs and herbs. See how many species you can count.
8. **Cambridge Pines Natural Area, Cambridge:** Although this can be accessed through a public cemetery, you need to pass through private land to get there. We recommend waiting a couple of years to visit this site, when there will be a new parking area with easier and better public access. Stay tuned!
9. **Vernon Black Gum Swamps:** Find Basin Road in Vernon, and at its end you will find the trailhead at Maynard Miller Town Forest. The trails are clearly marked and will take you beside at least two of the spectacular swamps. Well worth the trip, no matter where you are coming from.
10. **Kingsland Bay State Park, Ferrisburgh:** Find your way to the state park. Walk to Hawley House and then to the lake bluff. Find the shore trail at the end of the meadow. Explore off-trail to see the ancient gnarled cedars. Look for rough stairs that lead you down a ledge to the wildest stretch.