



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

Buds (clockwise from upper left) of tulip poplar, American beech, red maple and pawpaw

FLORA
FROM PAGE 1

Another distinctive bud we noticed on last weekend's excursion was the smooth, duck bill-like bud of a magnolia relative, the handsome tulip poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*. You can begin looking high up in the trees for beautiful green and yellow tulip-shaped flowers in mid-April.

Beech trees, *Fagus grandifolia*, easily known by their smooth trunks and for holding onto their copper-brown leaves, have a long narrow copper-colored

spear-point bud at the ends of horizontal branches. Keep an eye on those buds and observe how the old leaves are pushed off overnight on or just before April 1. That time clock is predictable.

Red maples, *Acer rubrum*, are easily recognized by those deeply red-colored twigs sporting red buds at the tips and oppositely arranged along the sides. The closely related southern sugar maple, *Acer barbatum*, is similar, except it is brown rather than red.

If you're really lucky, you may discover a grove of pawpaws, *Asimina*

triloba. Pawpaw buds are distinguished by the exposed young leaf protected with dark, velvet-like hairs. Further down, there may be a similarly textured fat, round flower bud. Definitely go back during late March and early April to see those pawpaw flowers.

Obviously, there are many more buds out there, each beautiful and interesting in distinctive ways. On your next woods walk, take time to "take a closer look" at the buds. And take that walk soon, because before long we won't be able to see the forest for the leaves.



Mrs. Roxie, Oxford, 1960s

When I asked my photo students to bring to class a single meaningful family snapshot, Kafi Robinson, a senior journalism major from Oxford, turned in this piece of unintentional documentary photography. Her great grandmother, Roxie Johnson, watches over four little white girls at the kitchen table. Here is Kafi's narrative: "She worked as a maid for this rich white family a few blocks from her

house. Rain, sleet or snow, every day at the same time she walked to their house to cook, clean and take care of their kids. She was like their mother in many ways. It got to the point where the kids wouldn't eat their real parents' [cooking] – they would wait until 'Mrs. Roxie' came. This family NEVER gave her a ride to or from their house. She loved those children as if they were her own.... [T]he children in this photo are innocent, not realizing how much racial tension there was in that small town."



A THOUSAND WORDS
BY JOCK LAUTERER

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