

World's Oldest Fossil Forest Dating Back 390 Million Years was Discovered in New York

A 390 million-year-old forest fossil was discovered in New York. This sheds light on the pivotal role of early forests in shaping the ecological landscape of the Earth.



Mumbai, Maharashtra Mar 15, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Among the world's most ancient forests, one treasure was discovered in New York. The world's oldest fossil forest was discovered in the city's upstate which sheds light on the primeval history of the planet. At the same time, the discovery also highlights the primal role of the early forests in forming the ecological landscape of the Earth. Reports stated that a network of trees lies at the heart of Cairo, USA. These trees are believed to have stretched over 400 km (250 miles) once, concealing the sandstone quarry's base.

This is the fossil forest that is estimated to be 386 million years old. If the reports are to be believed, this would make this new discovery surpass even the renowned wonders of nature like the Amazon rainforest, remote forests in Southeast Asia, and India's legendary jungles. This is a collective effort led by scientists from Cardiff University, Binghamton University, and New York State Museum. In 2019, a detailed mapping of around 3,000 sq m of the forest was undertaken. This ancient woodland is situated within the foothills of the Catskill Mountains in the Hudson Valley which offers a brief glance into a prehistoric ecosystem. Numerous early plants such as those reminiscent of ferns, cladoxylopsids, and Archaeopteris with frond-like branches are said to be some of the forest's inhabitants. In addition to this discovery, a third tree type, likely to be a lycopod, was also unearthed. This adds such a layer to the botanical diversity of the forest.

What sets this ancient woodland apart from anything else on the Earth is the unique mode of

reproduction that is found here. The trees in the fossil forest propagated entirely through spores rather than seeds. It is a notable stage in the evolution of Botany. A paleobotanist at Cardiff University, Dr. Christopher Berry described this experience of walking through the roots of these ancient trees as a walk through time. He further elaborated on the reconstruction of the fossil forest. He paints a vivid picture of the forest's ancient past, envisioning a landscape with coniferous-like trees that are interspersed with fern-like plant clumps. Additionally, Dr. Berry stressed on the importance of understanding the habitats and ecology of these ancient forests. He emphasizes on the significance of these old woodlands and their part in resolving the mysteries of global environmental processes. Scientists through disruptive research and help from Sheffield University explore the fossil soil probing geochemical changes to gain an understanding of the planet's transition into forested land.

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