

The Need for Trees



Trees are very important to people, animals, insects, fungi, and even other trees. This is because trees provide so many things for people and the forest, including shelter, habitat, food and oxygen. This TRACK Trail Adventure will help you identify six of the most common trees found along this trail.



Use this brochure to identify and learn about trees. For your safety, stay on the trail and be aware of your surroundings. Poison ivy climbs up the trunks of trees, too... so if you see a hairy vine don't hug that tree!



TRACK your hike at
kidsinparks.com
 and get **FREE** prizes!

Thanks for joining us on the trail today! Visit our website to find more TRACK Trail™ adventures near you!



The next generation of stewards will help preserve the world's plants, animals, natural lands and our heritage. What will you do to make a difference?



Kids in Parks...

Providing a network of fun-filled adventures that get kids and families active outdoors and connected to nature.



Kids in Parks Founding Partners



Just like trees, seeds come in different shapes and sizes. With a little help from soil nutrients, moisture and sunlight, seeds can sprout into seedlings. For most tree species, when the sprout has reached 4 feet tall and up to 4 inches in diameter it becomes a sapling. Saplings officially become trees when their trunks are thicker than 4 inches in diameter at chest height.

Most trees will continue to grow until their death. Sometimes, dead trees don't fall to the forest floor immediately. These trees, called snags, play an important role as habitat in the forest. Fallen trees and snags slowly decompose, recycling valuable nutrients back into the soil. This enriched soil helps sprouting seeds grow into healthy saplings, which then become full-grown trees to complete the cycle.

Tree Cycle

Tree Cycle Checklist:
 Can you find a...

Seed?

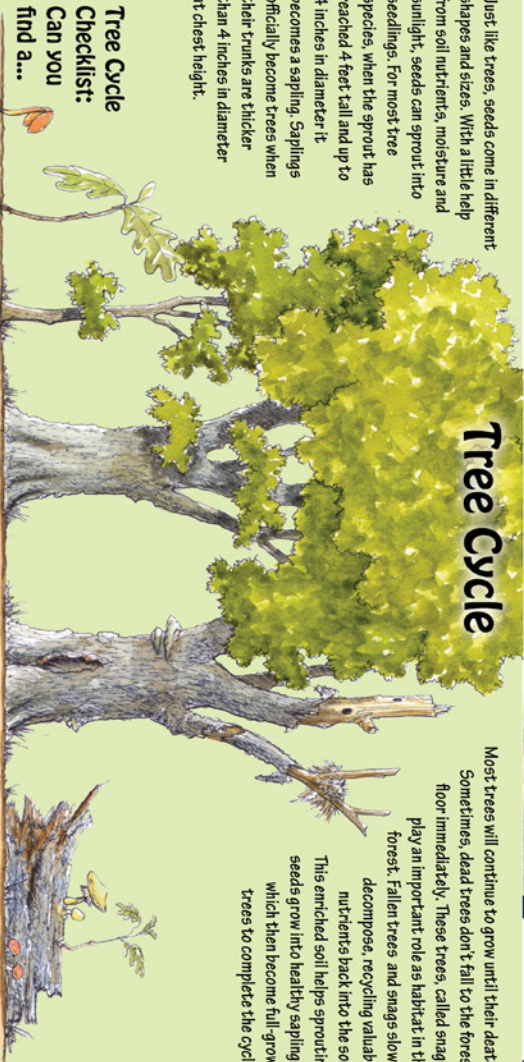
Seedling?

Sapling?

Tree?

Snag?

Fallen Log?



White Oak



The leaves of the white oak have rounded lobes, and the bark is light gray and scaly on older trees. The acorns are elongated with a shallow cup, and have a sweet taste, which makes them a preferred food of deer, bear, turkeys, squirrels and other wildlife. Because of the water-tight quality of the wood, white oak was valued in olden times for shipbuilding, and is still used today to make barrels.

Tulip Poplar



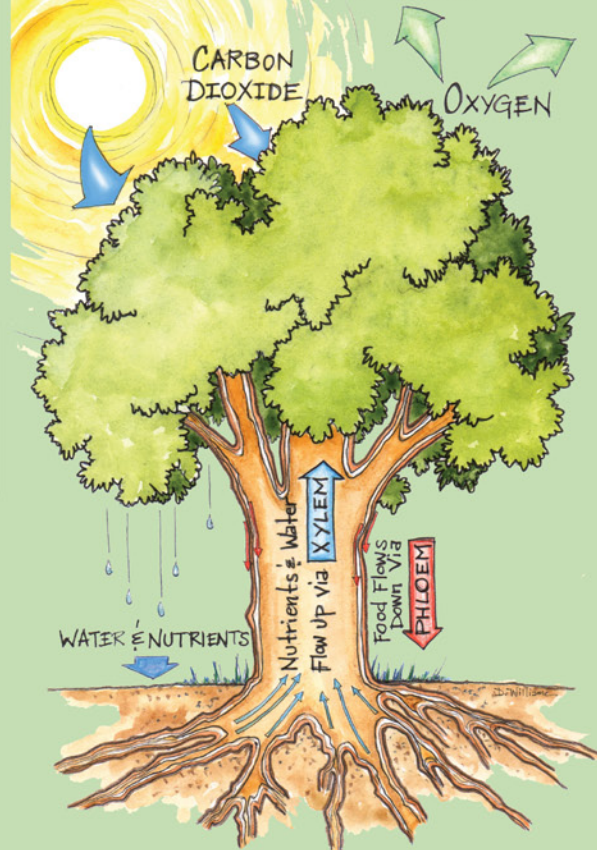
Growing straight and tall with a light gray bark and a large broad leaf that looks like the tip has been bitten off, the tulip poplar is easy to find. Due to its large size and straight growth, this tree provides a lot of useful lumber. Tulip poplar is also a very important tree for honey production. In spring, honeybees collect nectar from the poplar's large and plentiful yellow-orange flowers.

Flowering Dogwood



The flowering dogwood is a small tree that is abundant throughout the eastern United States. The bark of a dogwood has small cubic plates. The white "petals" of the dogwood flower are actually sepals (modified leaves), while the true flowers are the small yellow clusters in the middle. The buds look like gray-green chocolate chips. Dogwood trees were historically used to create quinine - a fever reducer.

The Need to Know How Trees Grow



Plants and trees have the ability to make their own food in a process known as photosynthesis. They do this by sucking water and nutrients from the soil up through their xylem and into their leaves. The water and nutrients are combined with carbon dioxide and sunlight to make a sugary food called glucose. This food then travels down through the phloem to the rest of the tree, so it can grow.

Illustrations by David Williams, Wagons 'n' Works

Sourwood



Due to their deeply furrowed, chunky bark and curvy branch growth, sourwood trees are easy to find. In spring, their white flowers hang in clusters from the branch tips, and in fall the leaves turn crimson red. Sourwood lumber is of little value commercially, but sourwoods are an important source of nectar and pollen, which bees use to make a light-colored honey that is prized in the mountains.

Red Maple



Able to grow in almost any soil condition, the red maple is one of the most abundant and widespread trees in eastern North America. With red twigs, buds, flowers, and seeds, it's easy to see how the red maple got its name. Red maple wood is used to make parts of guitars, banjos, drums, and other musical instruments because of its flexibility, sturdiness, and beautiful coloration.

White Pine



With an extremely straight trunk, needle leaves in fascicles (bundles) of five and long skinny cones, the eastern white pine is easy to identify. This tree has long been used as a source of food and medicine. The needles are high in vitamin C and are used to make tisane, an herbal tea. Deer and rabbits eat the foliage and songbirds and mice graze on the seeds. White pine is also a valuable lumber tree.