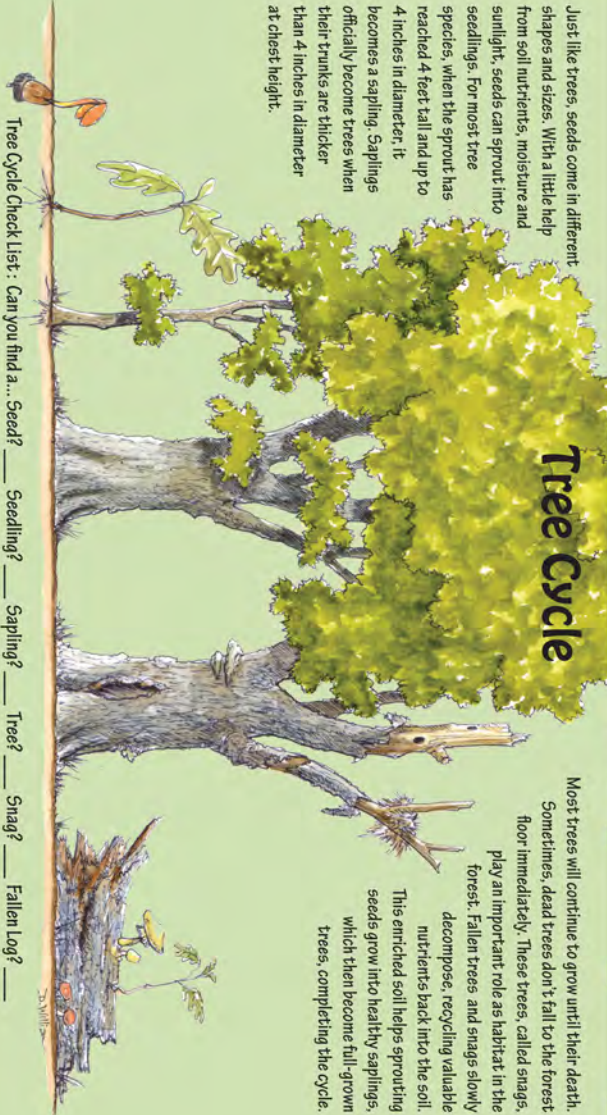


Tree Cycle Check List : Can you find a... Seed? ___ Seedling? ___ Sapling? ___ Tree? ___ Snag? ___ Fallen Log? ___

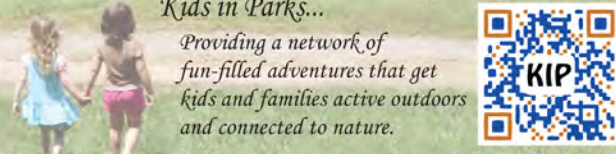
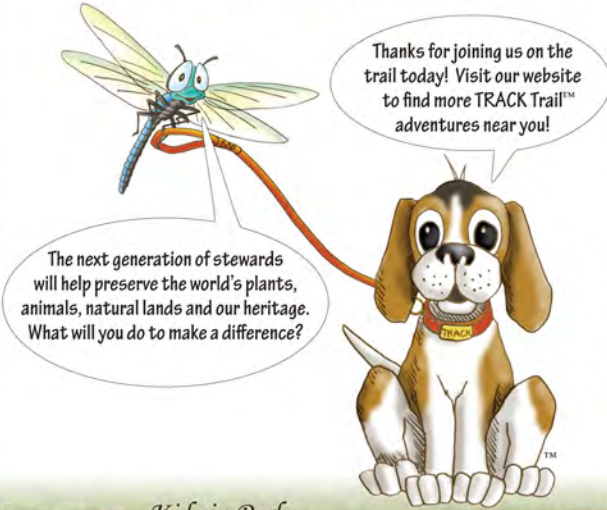


Just like trees, seeds come in different shapes and sizes. With a little help from soil nutrients, moisture and sunlight, seeds can sprout into seedlings. For most tree species, when the sprout has reached 4 feet tall and up to 4 inches in diameter, it becomes a sapling. Saplings officially become trees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

Tree Cycle

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, completing the cycle.

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The Need for Trees

Trees are very important to people, animals, insects, fungus, 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.



Coastal Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)



Coastal live oaks have light gray bark with shallow furrows (cracks) that are darker gray. The leaves are dark green, oval, often convex in shape, and have a spiny-tooth that extends from the lateral leaf veins. The acorns are long and slender and have a light brown, reddish hue. The acorns were a main food source for many Native American tribes, and offer a great food source for various wildlife.

Western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)



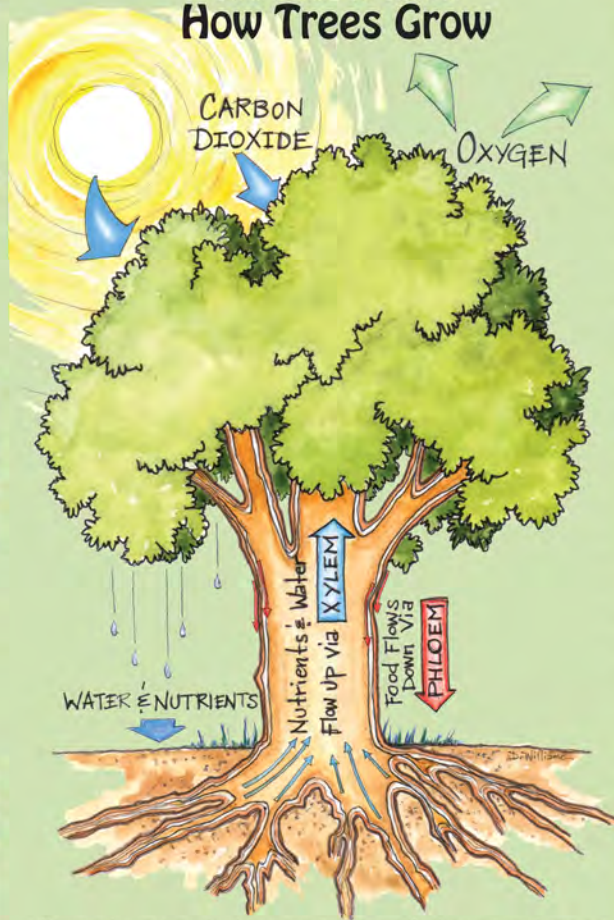
The Western sycamore is a tall tree with a trunk that generally divides into two or more large trunks splitting into many branches. The bark is a patchwork of colors, with older bark becoming darker and peeling away. The leaves have 5 pointed lobes and the flowers are a pink ball that develop into a spike covered fruit. Butterflies, especially the **Western tiger swallowtail** depend on it as a food source.

Arroyo Willow (*Salix lasiolepis*)



The arroyo willow is a large deciduous shrub or small tree with smooth bark and yellowish to dark brown twigs. The leaves are alternate and are 3-4" long and 3/4" wide. The tree is susceptible to **galls** (growths on the leaves) that incubate insect larvae. Native Americans used willow to cure a variety of ailments, including fevers, itchiness and diarrhea.

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 is then distributed by way of its phloem to the rest of the tree, so it can grow.

Illustrations drawn by David Williams

Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*)



The Canary Island pine is a large evergreen tree growing 120-160' tall. The reddish-brown bark is cracked and very thick, and the trunks grow extremely straight. Their extremely long green needle leaves grow in bundles (fascicles) of 3 and trap condensation from moist ocean air. The condensation drops to the ground and is absorbed by the soil, eventually trickling down to underground aquifers.

California Pepper (*Schinus molle*)



The California pepper has a rough, twisted, gray bark that drips sap, and compound leaves that are made up of 19-41 alternating leaflets. The tree's berries range in color from green to pink to red and purple and are carried in large clusters. Due to its antibacterial and antiseptic properties, California pepper has been used in traditional medicine for treating wounds and infections.

Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*)



The Fremont cottonwood is a large tree growing up to 115' tall with a wide crown. The bark is smooth when young, but becomes deeply cracked on old trees. Their leaves are heart-shaped and have coarsely serrated edges. The cottonwood gets its name from its fruit that look like patches of cotton that are dispersed by wind. Native Americans used the twigs in basket weaving and the wood to make tools.