



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.



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.*



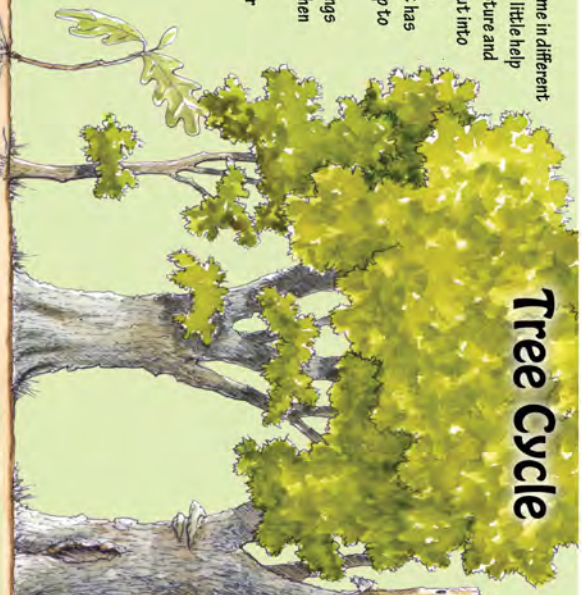
Kids in Parks Founding Partners



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.

Tree Cycle Checklist:
Can you find a...

- Seed? ___
- Seedling? ___
- Sapling? ___
- Tree? ___
- Snag? ___
- Fallen Log? ___



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 to complete the cycle.

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 Oak



The leaves of the white oak have rounded lobes, and the bark has a scaly appearance 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 trees were valued in olden times for shipbuilding, and white oak is still used today to make barrels.

Yellow 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 yellow poplar is easy to find. Due to its large size and straight growth, this tree provides a lot of useful lumber. Yellow 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.

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, Wingin' it Works

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 bracts (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.

Virginia Pine



Virginia pine has light red-brown bark that breaks into small gray plates on full-grown trees. The needles are short (1.5 to 3 inches long) and twisted, and grow in fascicles (bundles) of two. The cones are slightly smaller than a chicken's egg and have a long spine on the end of each scale. Virginia pine is a pioneer species, which means it grows well in fire-damaged areas and old fields.

Southern Red Oak



The southern red oak tree has dark brown bark with wide gray ridges. The leaves are shiny green and variable in shape, but usually have long pointed lobes and a distinctive bell shape at the base. The acorns are an important food source for squirrels, deer, turkeys, and many songbirds. Because of its large size and strong wood, southern red oak has long been used by humans for lumber and fuel.