



The Need for Trees

Trees are an essential part of our environment! They are important to other plants, fungi, wildlife, and people and provide countless benefits, such as oxygen, shelter, and food. In this adventure, you'll learn to identify six of the most common trees found in the park.



Remember to stay on the trail and leave no trace. For your safety, look out for other plants, like poison oak or ivy, that may be climbing up the tree!



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All trees start out as seeds that will sprout into seedlings.

A sapling is the next stage of a tree's life. Seedlings become saplings when they reach four feet tall.

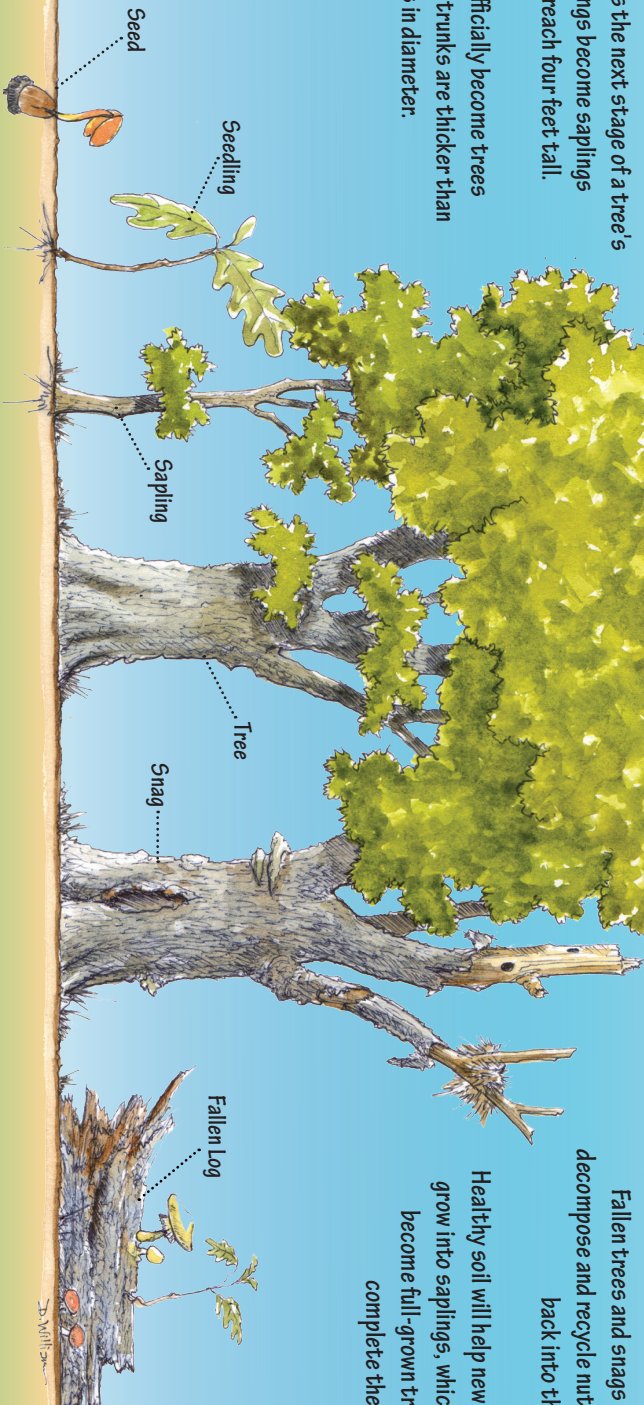
Saplings officially become trees when their trunks are thicker than four inches in diameter.

Tree Life Cycle

When a tree dies, it sometimes becomes a snag, which is a dead tree that hasn't fallen.

Fallen trees and snags slowly decompose and recycle nutrients back into the soil.

Healthy soil will help new seeds grow into saplings, which then become full-grown trees to complete the cycle.



Can you find a...

Seed? ___

Seedling? ___

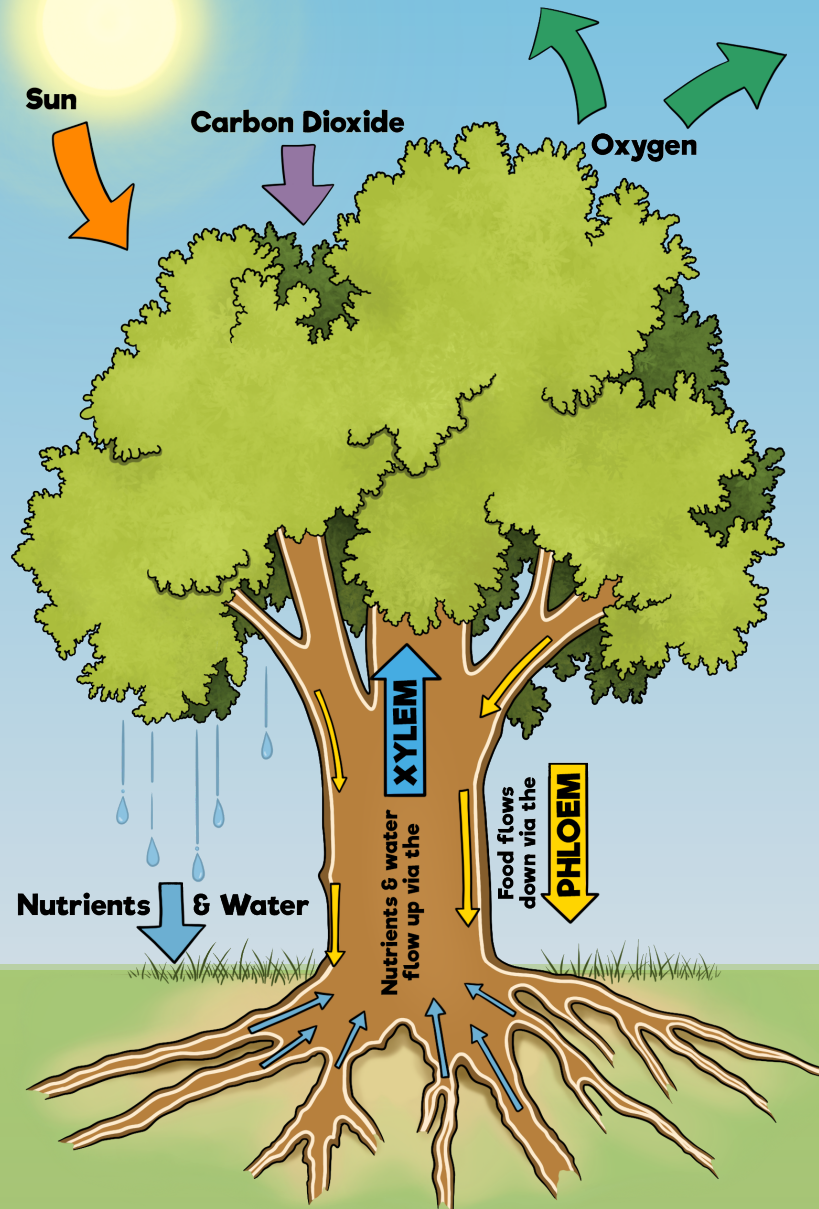
Sapling? ___

Tree? ___

Snag? ___

Fallen Log? ___

The Need to Know How Trees Grow



Most plants make their own food through a process known as **photosynthesis**. This occurs when nutrients and water flow up from the roots via the xylem and combine with carbon dioxide and sunlight absorbed in the leaves. This chemical reaction produces **oxygen**, which is released into the air, and **glucose**, a type of sugar, that is dispersed throughout the rest of the tree via the phloem.

Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)



As the largest poplar in America, the black cottonwood reaches 150 feet tall. Its glossy leaves elongate into a distinct tip, and the gray bark is covered in lenticels (pore-like slits for gas exchange). The many cotton-tufted seeds are dispersed by wind and water. Tools, like rope, traps, and glue, were once made from the tree. Its fragrant flowers are used in perfumes and the pulp is used for paper products.

Pacific Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*)



The pacific dogwood is a small tree with oval leaves and unique flower structures. The flowers are actually the yellow cluster in the center, and they're surrounded by white, petal-like leaves called bracts. The tree provides shelter for small animals and produces red berries that are eaten by rodents, birds, and bears. The bark has been used as a brown dye in some tribes. Today, it is a valued ornamental tree.

Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)



This evergreen conifer spans 300 feet high and lives up to 1,000 years old. It has soft, flat needles that whirl around the branches and a very thick bark, making it extremely fire-resistant. The tree provides food and shelter for countless wildlife. Indigenous tribes used the plant to make medicine, tea, canoes, and buildings. It is one of the best timber-producing species and heavily used in construction.

Oregon Oak (*Quercus garryana*)



The Oregon oak, with deeply furrowed bark and green, lobed leaves, lives up to 500 years old. The acorns are eaten by wildlife, and Native Americans ground them into a flour. This oak spreads well after disturbances, like fire, and is a vital species in bunchgrass prairies and oak woodlands. Since a large majority were logged in the 20th century, conservation efforts focus on preserving their ecosystems.

Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)



The vine maple is a small tree with reddish-green bark and palmate leaves that have 7-11 lobes. It has small samaras (seedpods) that are eaten by various birds and mammals. In the fall, it turns a bright orange red. The branches are very flexible, often falling over into an arch shape and growing multiple trunks, and indigenous tribes used them to weave baskets. It is a common ornamental tree in gardens.

Pacific Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*)



As a broadleaf evergreen tree, the pacific madrone has thick, waxy leaves and can live for over 300 years. It's red-orange bark peels away in strips as it ages. The fruit, shoots, and flowers supply food for a wide range of wildlife, and the dense foliage provides shelter. Native Americans used the berries and bark to make teas and decor. The wood is used to produce firewood, flooring, and veneers.