

Get to Know Your Trees Activity



At a Glance

Discover the names of five common trees in your neighborhood. Learn how to identify these trees using their characteristics. Collect sticks during your journey to create a piece of art.

Did You Know?

Did you know Longwood Gardens was once home to the Peirce Arboretum, a nationally recognized collection of deciduous trees from all over the globe? When Pierre S. du Pont purchased the property in 1906, his goal was to save the mature trees on the property from being cut down by a lumber company. A team of arborists takes great pride in caring for Longwood's trees throughout the year.

What is an Arborist?

An arborist is a person whose career is focused on the care and well being of trees. Arborists need to know how to identify different species of trees, what will help trees to thrive, and how to treat trees when they are ill. Arborists must also be able to climb tall trees to maintain their growth and trim or cut down branches when necessary.

Trees grow all over the world. There are two main types of trees, deciduous and evergreen. Deciduous trees lose their leaves for part of the year. Evergreen trees do not lose all their leaves at the same time. Instead they replace old foliage with new so that the tree is never completely bare.

Tree Identification Education



Let's take a closer look at five common deciduous trees.

Flowering Dogwood

This is a smaller tree that has beautiful flowers every spring and grows to no more than 30 feet. The leaves are oval shaped with a smooth edge and grow opposite on the branch. The bark of the tree is reddish-brown and consists of small plates.



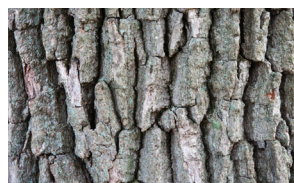
Eastern Redbud

This tree is a smaller tree, growing 15–25 feet tall. This tree produces a spectacular lavender-pink flower every spring before the leaves begin to grow. The trunk of this tree is thin with a gray bark which is usually smooth with red streaks. The leaves are heart-shaped with pointed tips and smooth edges. The leaves grow alternately on the branch.



White Oak

This is a large tree, which can grow 50–70 feet tall. Most people can recognize this tree easily when acorns begin to drop from it in the fall. The bark is typically light gray with broken reddish scales. The leaves can be up to 8 inches long! Leaves have equal sized lobes, with notches deeply cut or shallow and are sometimes found clustered at the ends of the branches. The leaves are alternately attached to the branches.



Tree Identification Education



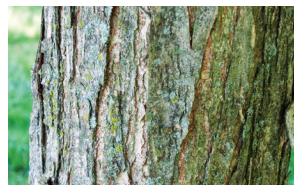
Sweet Gum

This tree can grow as high as 100 feet! The fruit of this tree is easily recognizable, as it is a small round ball-shaped pod with spikes. The bark of the sweet gum tree is gray to brown with deep ridges. The lobed leaves are star-shaped with fine-toothed notches and pointed tips. The leaves are alternately attached to the branches.



American Elm

This tree can grow to approximately 80 feet tall and is one of the best-known trees in the United States. It has dark gray, deeply furrowed bark which can sometimes be scaly. The leaves are oval with toothed edges and pointed tips. These leaves are alternately attached to the branches of the tree.



Tree Hunt Activity



Materials:

- Clipboard or something to write on while outside
- Colored pencils
- Printed tree graph for observation

Hunt for five common trees in your yard or a nearby park. Record the number of each type of tree in the area and discover which tree is the most common near you.

Directions:

1. Before heading out on your journey, print the tree graph and gather your supplies. Print pages 2–3 to bring with you on your search to help you identify the trees you are looking for. If you don't have a printer, copy the information to blank piece of paper.
2. Go out in your yard or visit a nearby park with an adult.
3. Use your colored pencils to color in one space on the graph each time you observe one of the trees listed.
4. Count the total number of colored spaces for each tree listed.
5. Determine which tree is the most common in the area surveyed.

Extension:

- Research online to discover more information about other trees that may be growing in your yard or park. Can you identify these other trees? If you are not sure, you can use the iNaturalist Seek App to help you identify the trees.
- Identify different kinds of leaf shapes (Opposite, Alternate, Whorled, Simple, Compound, Pinnate, Palmate, Lobed, Toothed, Single Needles or Cluster Needles).
- Use crayons to do a leaf or bark rubbings for each type of tree in your yard.

Twig Letter Art Activity



Materials:

- Colorful selection of yarn or string
- Scissors
- Thin twigs
- Twine or hot glue gun

During your journey to identify trees, collect twigs along the way. Use these twigs to create a colorful spelling of your name!

Directions:

1. Collect thin twigs from branches. Dry branches that have fallen on the ground will work best.



2. Break the twigs apart to shape into specific letters. Lay out the shape of your letter on a flat surface.



Twig Letter Art Activity



3. Use the yarn or string to tie together each edge of your letter. Or with the help of an adult, hot glue the pieces of your letter together.



4. Once your letter is together, wrap the colorful yarn or string around the twigs. When you are done wrapping, tie the end of the string / yarn in a knot or hot glue it down.



5. When the letter is complete, create a loop out of twine and attach the letter where you would like to be able to hang it. You can either tie the twine on or hot glue it to your letter.



Observation Tree Graph



Name _____

Look for trees in your yard or at a nearby park. Color in a space each time you observe one of the trees listed.

American Elm	Eastern Redbud	Flowering Dogwood	Sweet Gum	White Oak

Which tree is the most common in the area you surveyed? _____

What other types of trees are growing near you? _____