

## 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.

## Eastern Hemlock



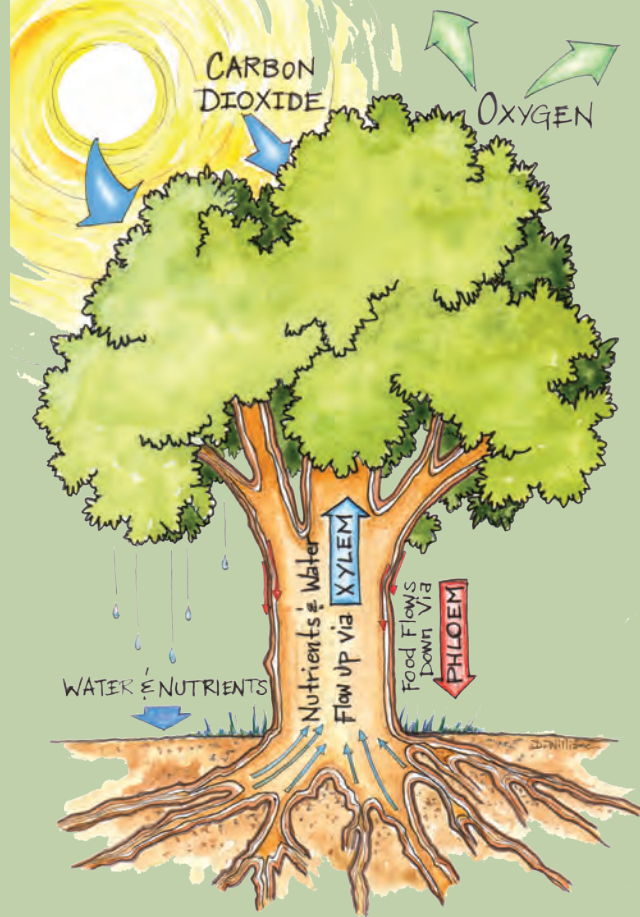
A very shade-tolerant tree, the eastern hemlock has short, rounded needles and cones about the size of a nickel. Over the past several decades, the eastern hemlock has been in decline due to the hemlock woolly adelgid, a tiny sap-sucking insect that was accidentally introduced from Asia. The woolly adelgid makes egg sacks that look like tiny tufts of wool on the tree's twigs.

## 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.

## 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

## River Birch



River Birch got its name because it likes to grow near water. The gray-brown bark **exfoliates** (peels) in paper-like strips. The leaves are green on top and whitish on the bottom, with serrated edges. White-tailed deer eat the leaves and twigs, and birds and rodents eat the seeds. Birch sap can be boiled to make birch syrup, which is sweeter than maple syrup, but harder to produce in large quantities.

## American Beech



With its extremely smooth, light gray bark and leaves with serrated edges, the American beech is a very easy tree to identify. The fruits (beech nuts) are eaten by a large variety of birds and mammals, including ducks, blue jays, deer, black bears and foxes. Beech wood is used commercially for flooring, furniture, plywood, railroad ties, paper pulp and heating.

## 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. Because of its curvy growth, the wood from sourwood trees is of little value commercially, but the tree is prized as a valuable source of honey in the mountains.



**Tree Cycle Checklist:**  
Can you find a...

Seed? \_\_\_\_\_

Seedling? \_\_\_\_\_

Sapling? \_\_\_\_\_

Tree? \_\_\_\_\_

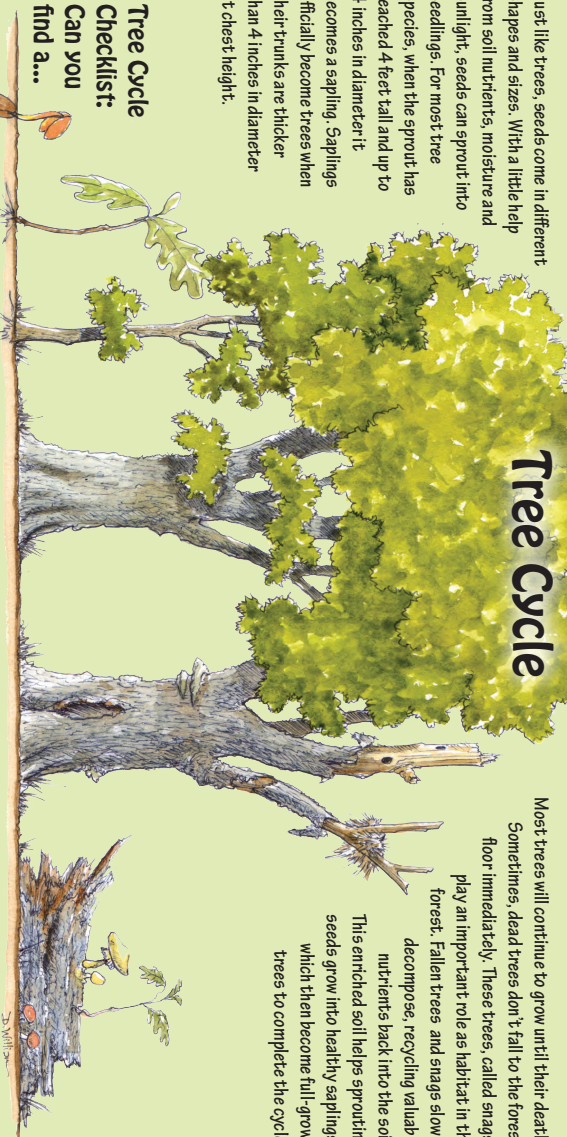
Snag? \_\_\_\_\_

Fallen Log? \_\_\_\_\_

# Tree Cycle

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.



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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.




Use the pictures and text in this brochure to identify and learn about trees. Just remember, for your safety, stay on the trail and be aware of your surroundings. Poison ivy likes to climb up the trunks of trees too... so if you see a hairy vine, Don't Hug That Tree!