



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.

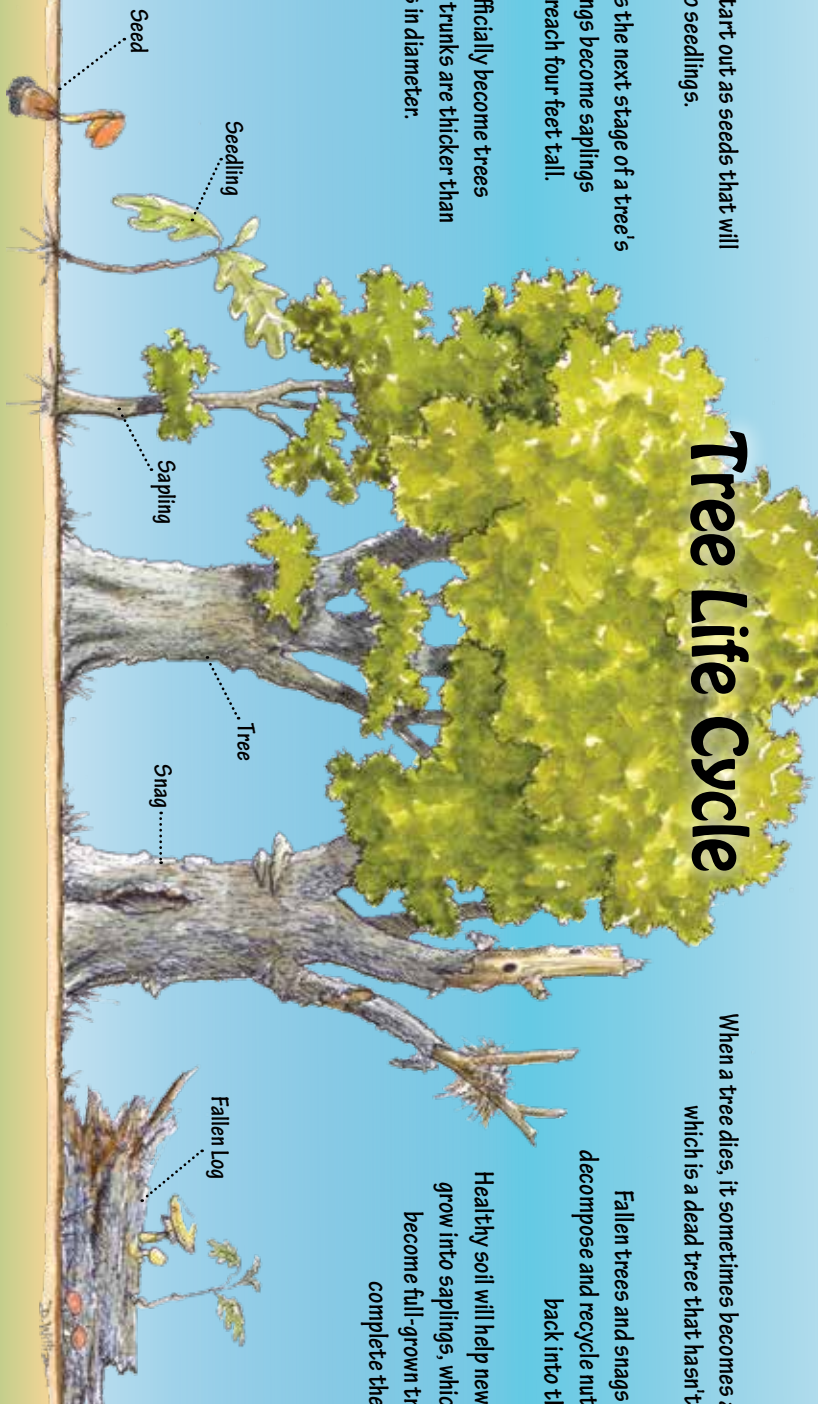
Saplings officially become trees when their trunks are thicker than four inches in diameter.

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? ___

● **Douglas Fir** (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)



Douglas firs are true forest giants! These tall, evergreen trees have thick bark, soft flat needles that spiral around the branches, and cones with little “mouse tails” sticking out. They provide food and shelter for all kinds of animals, from birds and squirrels to tiny insects. Long ago, Indigenous tribes used Douglas fir for medicine, tea, canoes, and even homes.

● **Ponderosa Pine** (*Pinus ponderosa*)



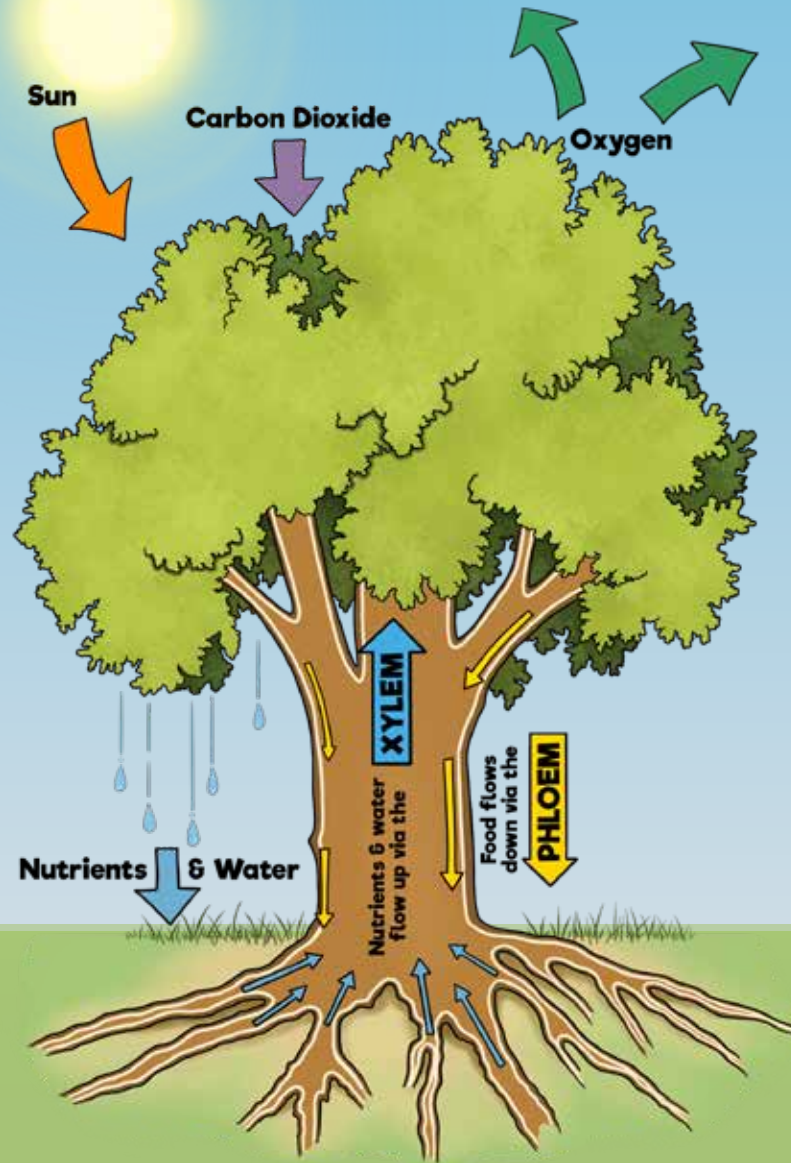
Ponderosa pines are towering trees with yellowish-orange bark that smells sweet—like vanilla or butterscotch! Their long needles grow in bundles of two or three, and their big cones are prickly to the touch. Lots of animals, like woodpeckers, chipmunks, and owls, live in and around these trees. Today, people use their wood to build houses, furniture, and even make musical instruments.

● **Red Maple** (*Acer rubrum*)



Red maples are colorful trees that shine in every season—with red buds in spring, red stems in summer, and blazing red leaves in the fall! Their leaves have three main points and their twirly, winged seeds spin like tiny helicopters. People plant red maples in parks and neighborhoods for their beauty, and use their strong, flexible wood to make furniture, tools, and musical instruments.

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.

● **Giant Sequoia** (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)



Giant sequoias are some of the biggest trees on Earth—growing as tall as a 25-story building! Their reddish-brown bark feels soft and spongy, and their egg-shaped cones hold hundreds of tiny seeds. Bears, birds, and insects find shelter in their massive trunks and high branches. Today, people protect these ancient trees in national parks, and scientists study them to learn about climate change.

● **Oregon Ash** (*Fraxinus latifolia*)



The Oregon ash is a cool, leafy tree that loves to grow near rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Its bark is gray and furrowed like an old puzzle, and its compound leaves have 5 to 9 leaflets that turn bright yellow in the fall. Oregon ash trees help stop floods, keep rivers clean, and give homes to frogs, birds, bugs, and more! People use their strong, springy wood to make tools, flooring, and even baseball bats.

! Bored to Death !



Emerald ash borers are shiny green beetles that hurt Oregon Ash trees by laying eggs under their bark. When the eggs hatch, the baby bugs “bore” through the tree, creating tunnels that disrupt the flow of water and nutrients. This can kill the tree! To help stop the spread of these invasive insects, people should avoid moving firewood (it might carry the beetles), plant different kinds of trees, and report any sick-looking ash trees to forest experts.