

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)



As you walk down the trail, look for the sharp, spiny, evergreen leaves of the American holly. It is also known as the Christmas holly because the red fruits appear in winter and are used for Christmas decorations. If eaten, their berries can make people very sick but are a valuable winter food source for deer and a variety of bird species.

Coastal Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

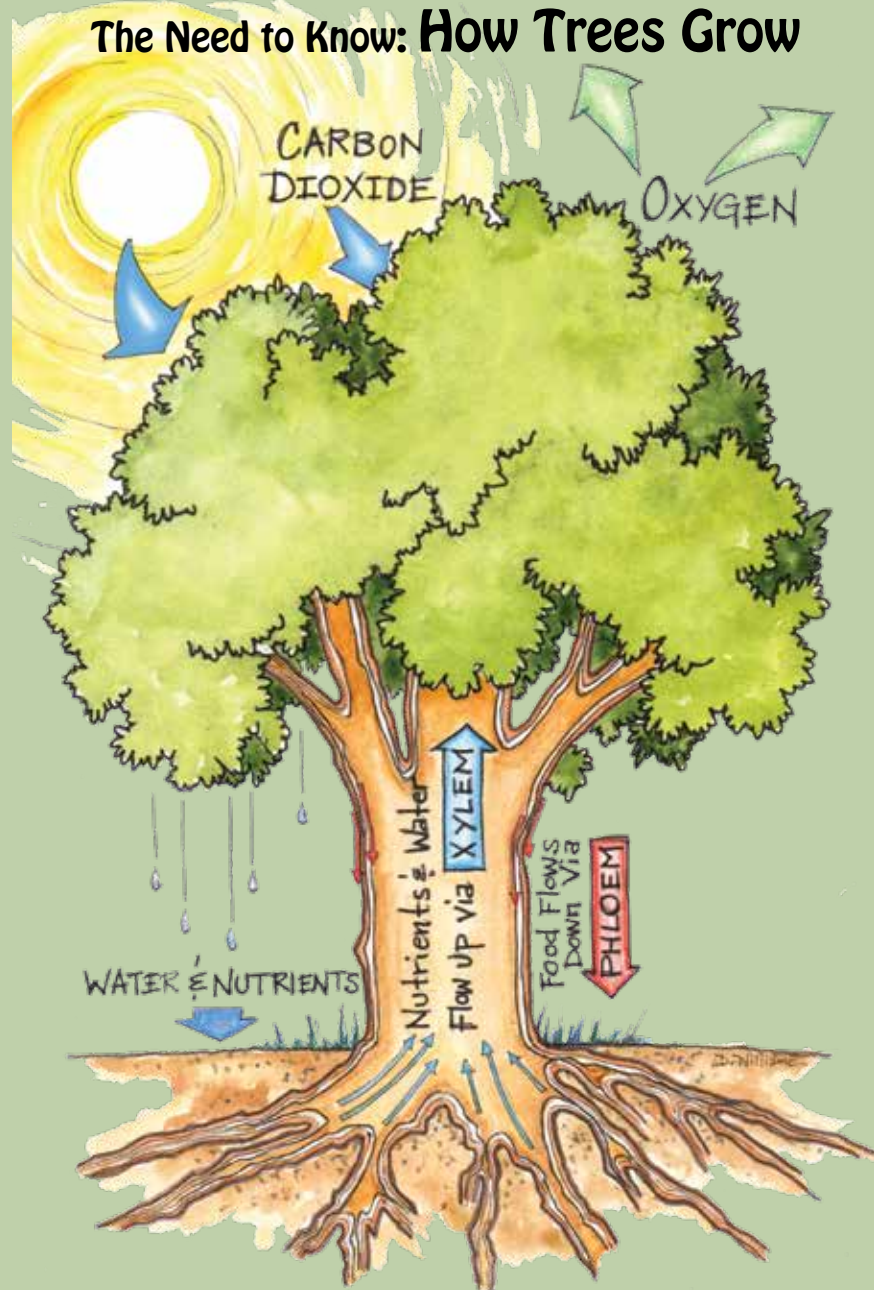


Coastal live oaks have light gray bark with shallow furrows (cracks) that are darker gray. The leaves are dark green, oval, often convex in shape, and have a spiny-tooth that extends from the lateral leaf veins. The acorns are long and slender and have a light brown, reddish hue. The acorns were a main food source for many Native American tribes, and offer a great food source for various wildlife.

Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*)



Loblolly pines have clusters of needles that grow in groups of three. The bark is thick, scaly and grey with layers of brown underneath, and their pinecones are brown and prickly. The loblolly can grow very quickly in either wet or dry soil. Because of how fast it grows, people plant them in huge numbers to later be used for lumber and paper. People also plant them to create shade and to stop erosion.



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

Redbay (*Persea borbonia*)



A relative of the avocado tree, redbay is a small evergreen tree with lance-shaped leaves that give off a spicy smell when crushed. The bark is rough and scaly, with an "alligator skin" appearance. The fruits are an important food source for many birds, and the leaves are eaten by deer and bears. Native Americans used redbay for medicinal purposes, and the leaves are still used today as food seasoning.

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)



The sassafras is a small tree that can be easily identified by its three distinct leaf shapes (entire, mittened and three-lobed). Although the soft, brittle wood is of little value commercially, its resistance to rot makes it good for use as fence posts and outdoor furniture. In the past, people used the spicy-scented sap to flavor candy, tea and root beer. Their fruits are also a favorite food for many birds.

Southern Red Oak (*Quercus falcata*)



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.

Can you find a...

Seed? ___

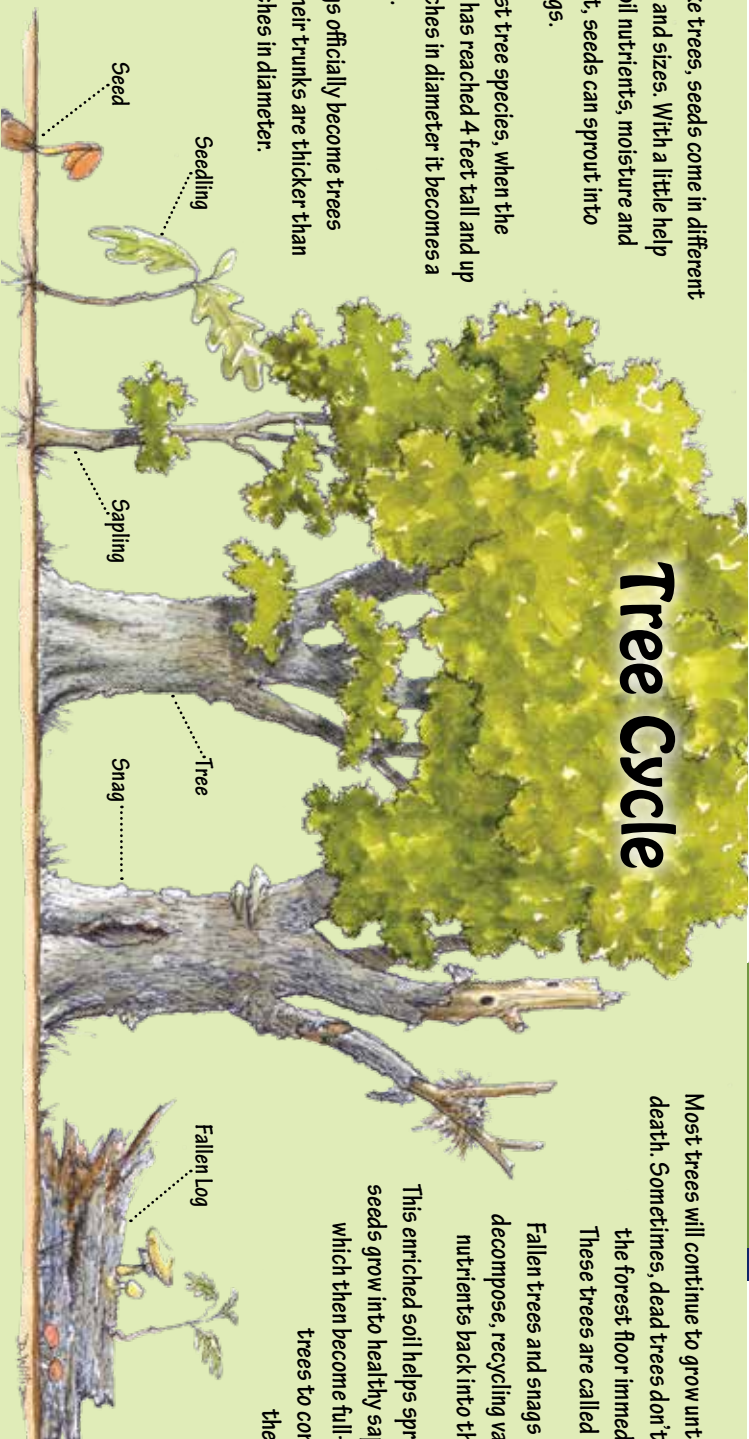
Seedling? ___

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.

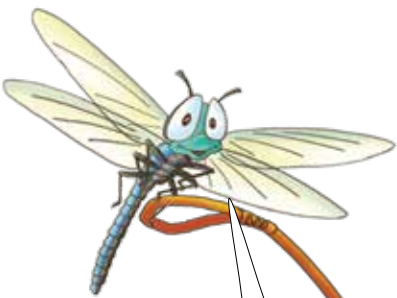
Saplings officially become trees when their trunks are thicker than four inches in diameter.

Most trees will continue to grow until their death. Sometimes, dead trees don't fall to the forest floor immediately. These trees are called snags.

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, fungi, 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!

