

## ☐ Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua)



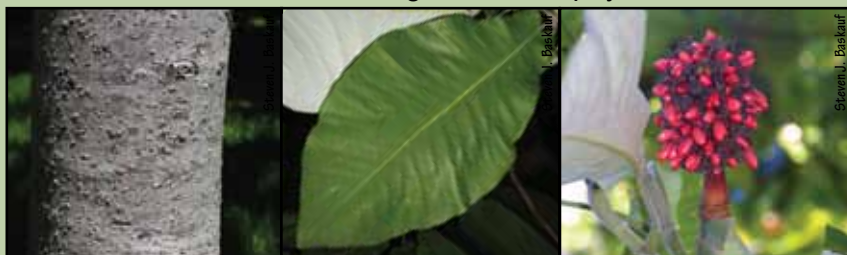
The Sweetgum is a “pioneer plant”, meaning that Sweetgums are among the first to begin growing in empty soil. Sweetgum seeds are carried by the tree’s unique, spikey fruit, called a “gumball”, and each fruit can contain up to 50 seeds. Other characteristics of the Sweetgum include its star-shaped leaves, and gray, wrinkled bark. Many animals depend on the Sweetgum for both food and shelter.

## ☐ American Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis)

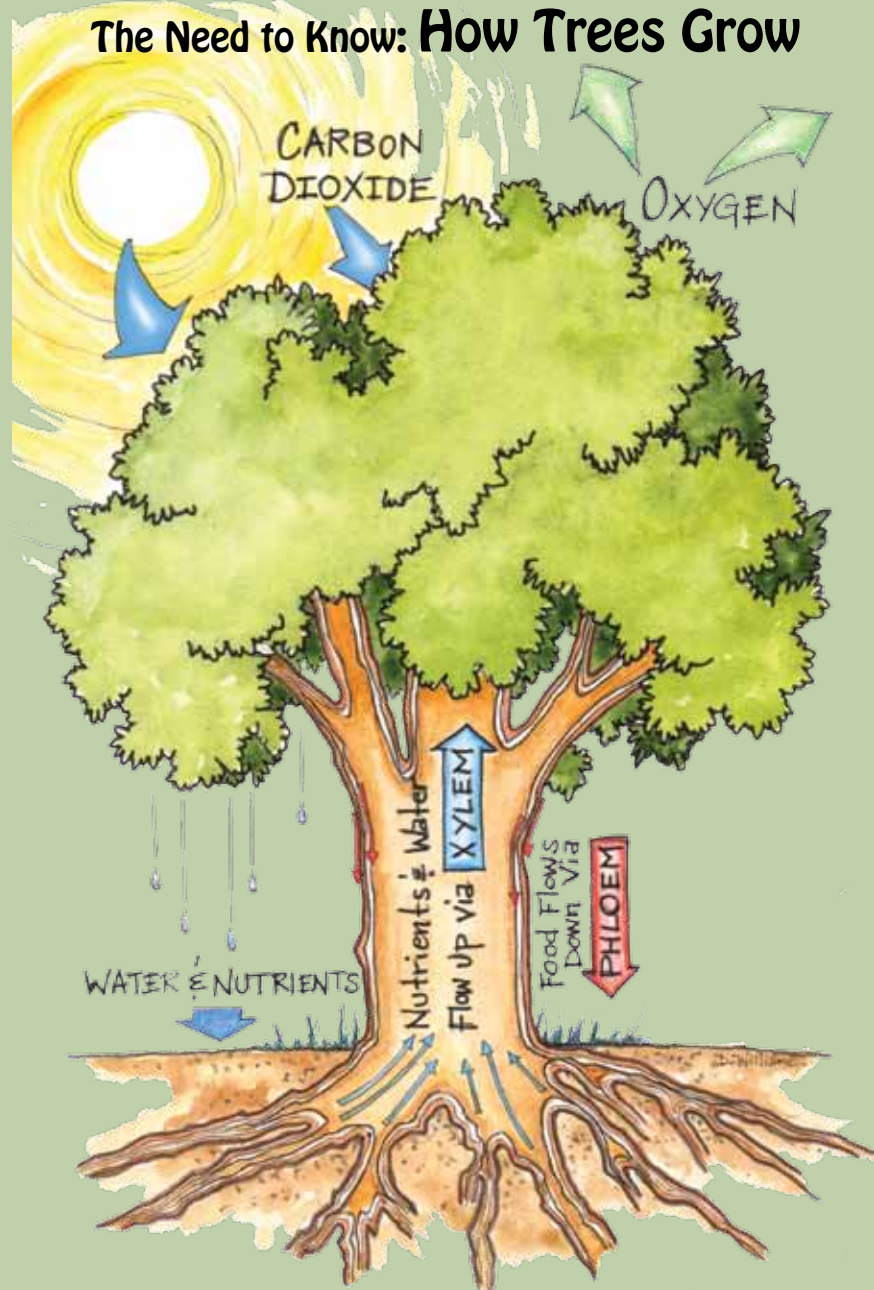


This fast growing tree is easily recognizable by its mottled bark, which peels off in large irregular sheets to reveal shades of white, green, yellow, and brown underneath. The leaf can have three to five lobes, and its edges are wavy with teeth. The round, bristly fruits are made up of hundreds of individual seeds which can travel on wind or water.

## ☐ Bigleaf Magnolia (Magnolia macrophylla)



The bigleaf magnolia is commonly used as a shade tree, and can be recognized by its leaves, which can grow 12 to 36 inches long. It has the largest simple leaves of any North American tree. Its leaves and equally large blossoms indicate that it is a primitive species. Other features of this magnolia are smooth, gray bark, and rounded, hairy fruit with bright red seeds.



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

## ☐ Tulip Poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera)



Growing straight and tall with a light gray bark and a large broad leaf that looks like the tip has been bitten off, the tulip poplar is easy to find. Due to its large size and straight growth, this tree provides a lot of useful lumber. Tulip poplar is also a very important tree for honey production. In spring, honeybees collect nectar from the poplar’s large and plentiful yellow-orange flowers.

## ☐ 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 holiday 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.

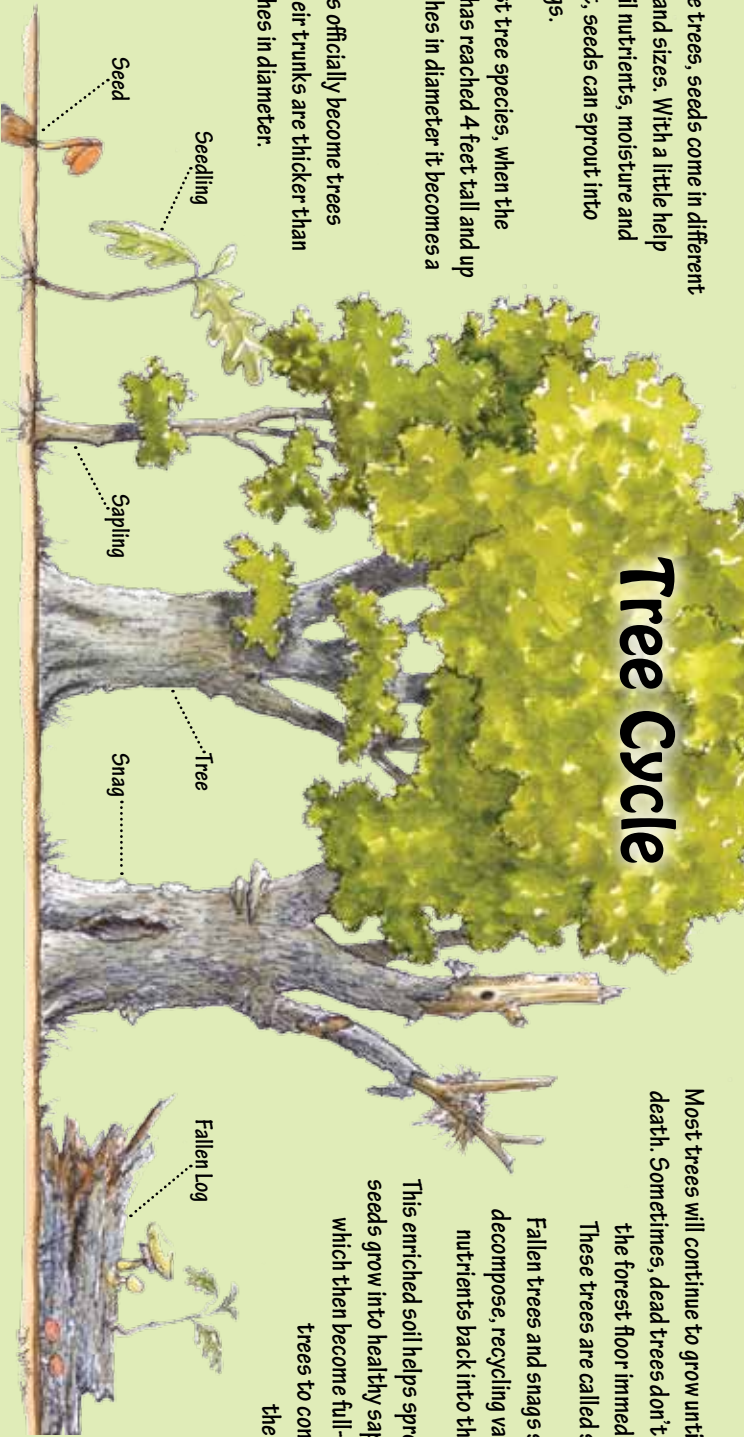
## ☐ Common Persimmon (Diospyros virginiana)



The common persimmon is usually irregularly shaped, with a short trunk and dangling branches. It’s dark gray bark is scaly with deep divides, and its thick oval leaves are dark green. The fruit, which is a pale orange when ripe, can be eaten raw, cooked, or dried. It is especially popular for being used in desserts and candy. The large brown seeds can be found in a variety of animal scat in the fall.



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!

