

**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 sycamore is also known as a buttonwood because of its round, bristly fruits. Parts of the tree were once used by Native Americans as medicine.

**Tulip Poplar** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

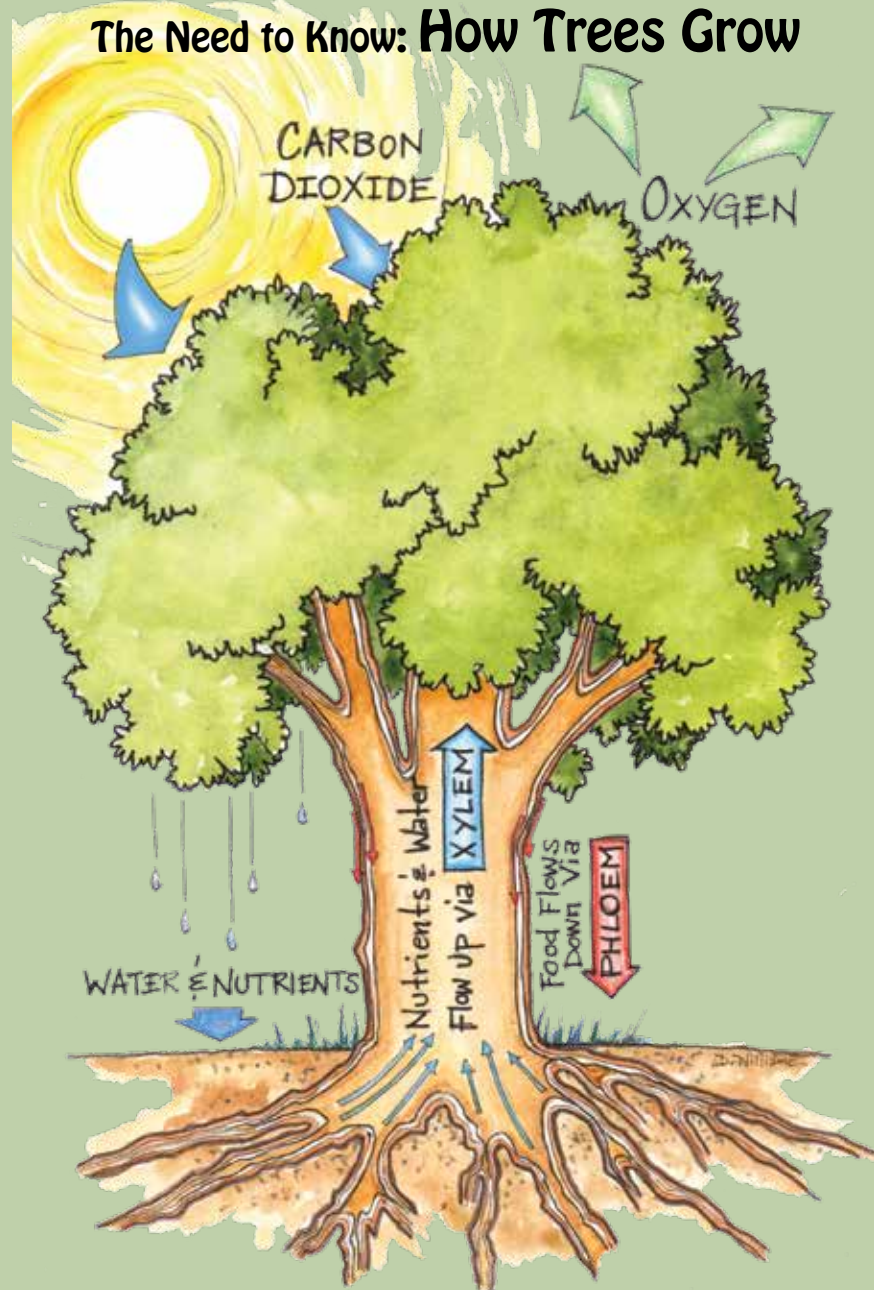


Growing straight and tall with a light gray bark and a large broad leaf that looks like the tip has been bitten off, the tulip poplar is easy to find. Due to its large size and straight growth, this tree provides a lot of useful lumber. Tulip poplar is also a very important tree for honey production.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

**Black Cherry** (*Prunus serotina*)



The black cherry's leaves are dark green and shiny with a fine, saw-toothed edge. The smooth bark has horizontal lines called lenticels. The black cherry tree is very widespread due to the many birds and mammals that eat the tree's fruits and disperse the seeds. Settlers in the Southern Appalachians used the fruit to make jelly, and the bark of young cherry trees was used to make cough medicine.



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** (*Betula nigra*)



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.

**Persian Silk** (*Albizia julibris-*)



Also commonly called a "mimosa," this non-native tree came from the Middle East and Asia, and now thrives all over the southeastern United States. It is best recognized by its feathery, fern-like leaves, and pink, fuzzy blossoms that appear in the summer. These flowers are a good source of nectar for honeybees and butterflies. The mimosa also produces pods that remain throughout the winter.

**Northern Red Oak** (*Cornus florida*)



The northern red oak tree has reddish brown bark with broad gray ridges which appear to have a shiny stripe down the center. The leaves are shiny green with pointed lobes, turning a rich red color in the fall. The acorns were boiled and eaten by Native Americans, and are an important food source for many birds and mammals. The red oak is one of the most important lumber trees in North America.





# 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!



**TRACK** your hike at [kidsinparks.com](http://kidsinparks.com) and get **FREE** prizes!



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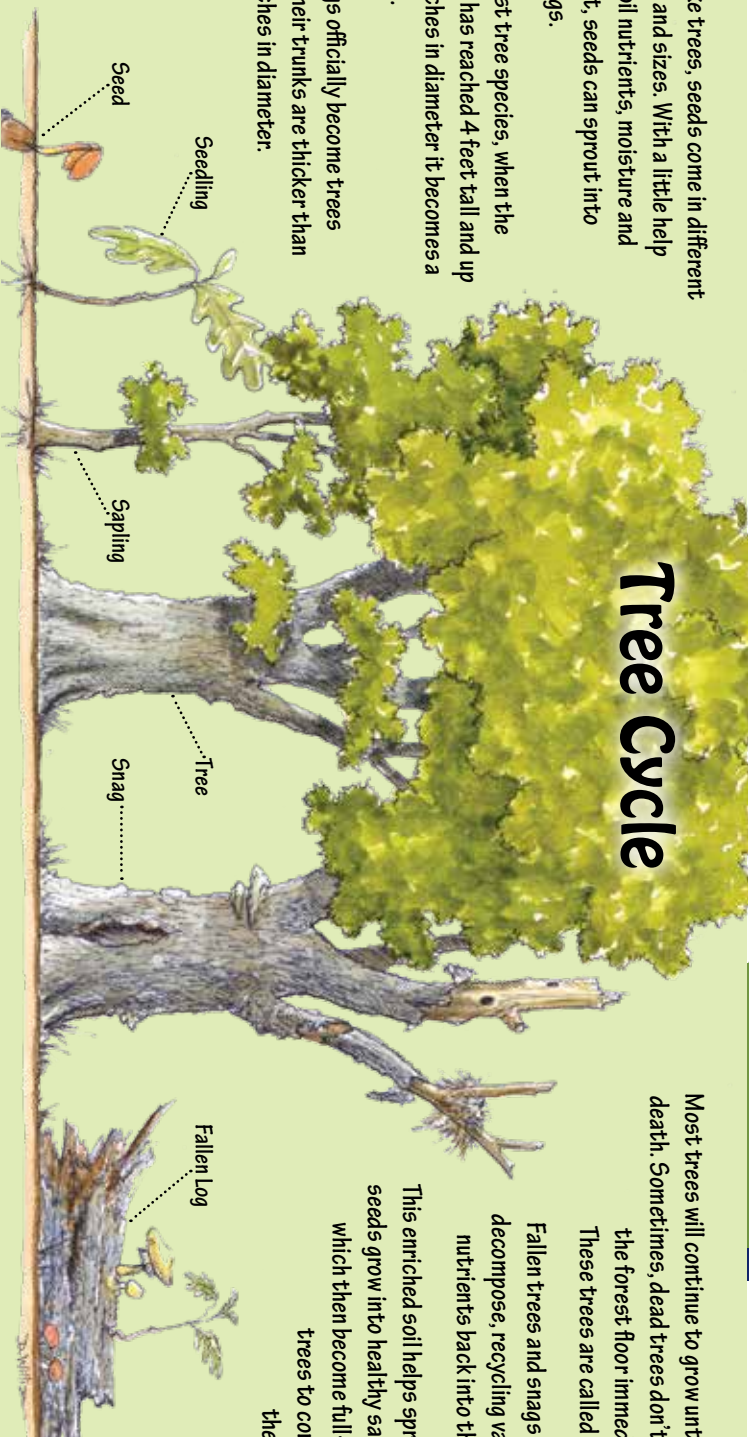


## Tree Cycle

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.

Can you find a...

Seed? \_\_\_

Seedling? \_\_\_

Sapling? \_\_\_

Tree? \_\_\_

Snag? \_\_\_

Fallen Log? \_\_\_