

☐ **White Oak** (*Quercus alba*)



The leaves of the white oak have rounded lobes, and the bark is light gray and scaly on older trees. The acorns are elongated with a shallow cap, and have a sweet taste, which makes them a favorite food for deer, bear, turkeys, squirrels and other wildlife. Because of the water-tight quality of the wood, white oak was valued in olden times for shipbuilding, and is still used today to make barrels.

☐ **Water Oak** (*Quercus nigra*)



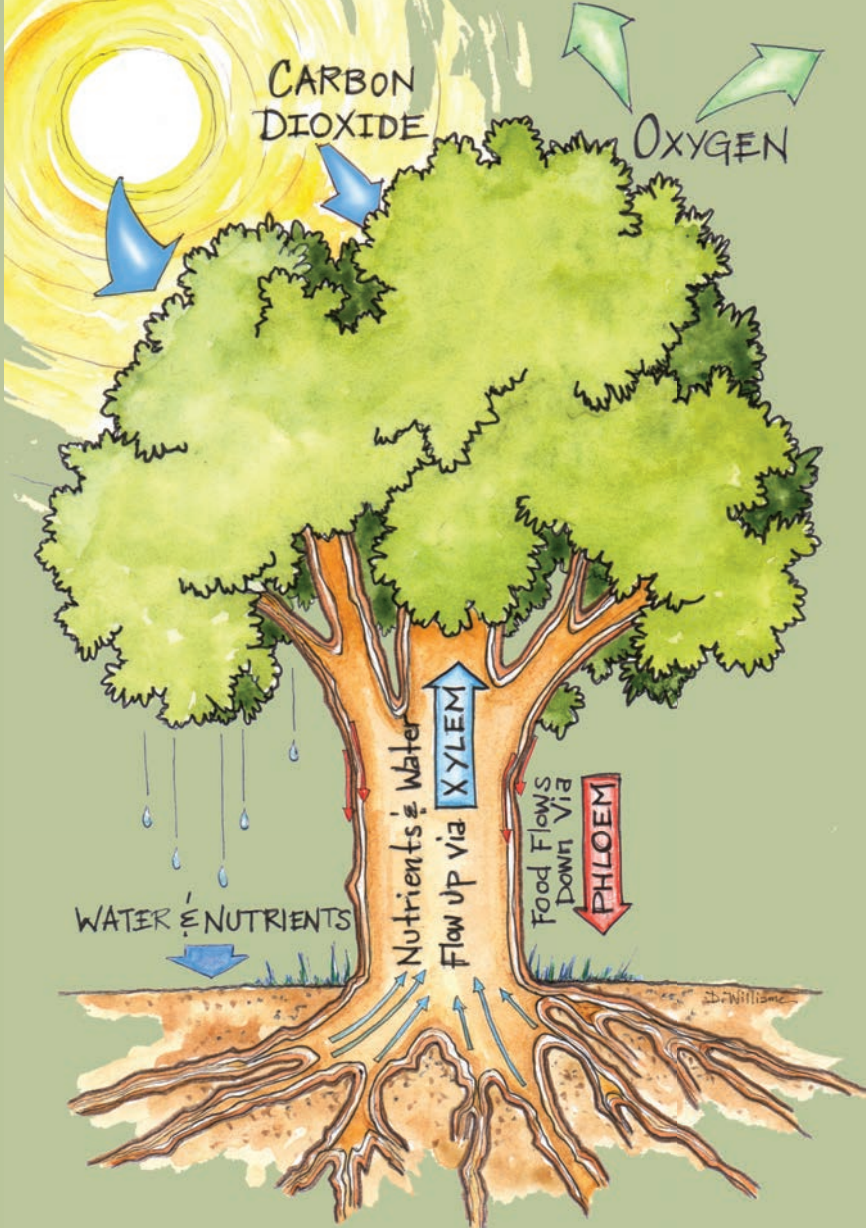
The water oak's leaves are spatula-like with three lobes at the end. The brown and grey bark tends to appear patchy, and it will develop rough, scaly ridges as it ages. They produce small acorns with shallow caps about the size of a dime. Forgotten acorns, buried by squirrels, are most responsible for the abundance of this fast-growing tree, and people often use the water oak's wood to heat their homes.

☐ **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.

**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

☐ **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.

☐ **Red Maple** (*Acer rubrum*)



Able to grow in almost any soil condition, the red maple is one of the most abundant and widespread trees in eastern North America. With red twigs, buds, flowers, and seeds, it's easy to see how the red maple got its name. Red maple wood is used to make parts of guitars, banjos, drums, and other musical instruments because of its flexibility, sturdiness, and beautiful coloration.

☐ **Sweet Bay** (*Laurus nobilis*)



This smooth-barked evergreen is accustomed to warmer climate and is native to the Mediterranean. Its leaves are leathery and stiff, and release fragrant oil when crushed. This oil is often used as a flavoring for food. The Ancient Greeks also used the leaves to create wreaths to crown scholars and athletes. In warm areas, the Sweet Bay will produce light-yellow fluffy flowers and small green to black fruit.



Can you find a...

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

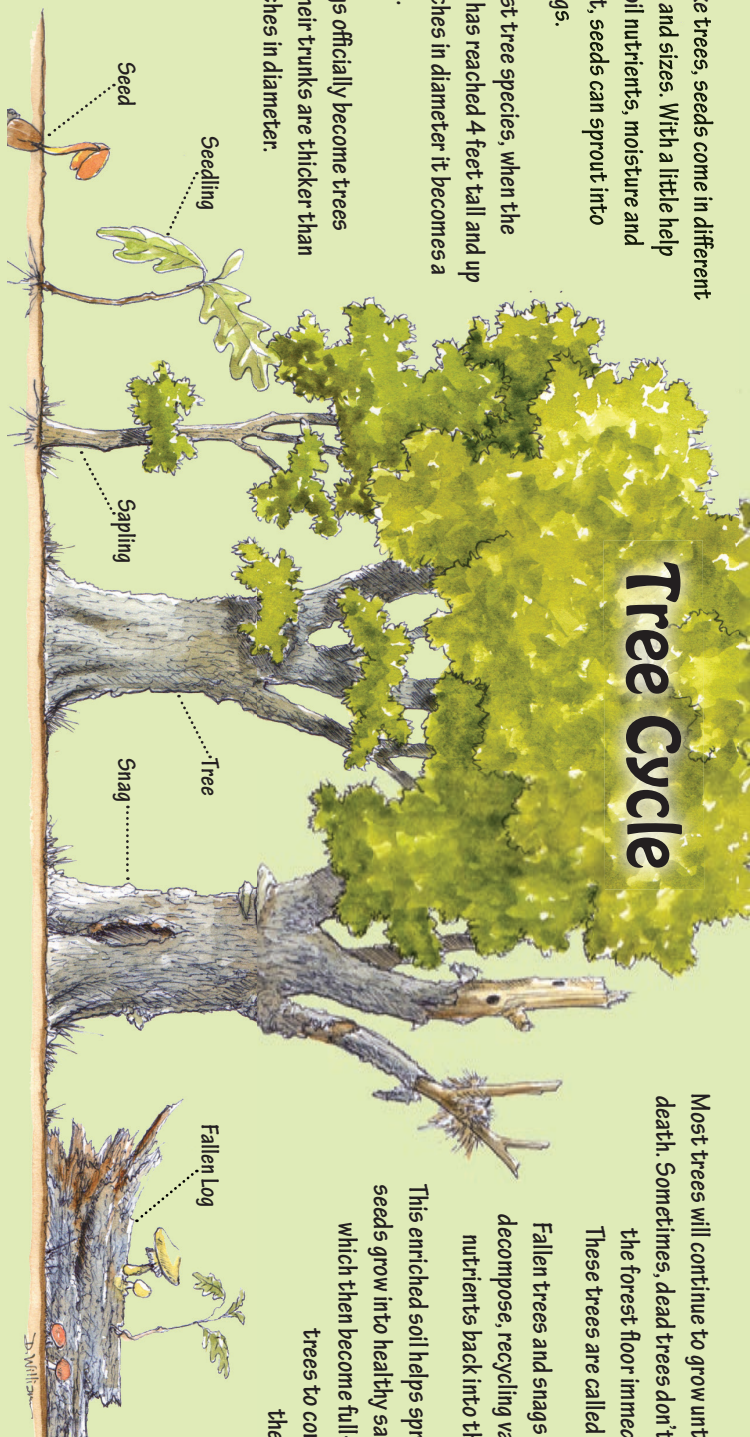
Seedling? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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



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.

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



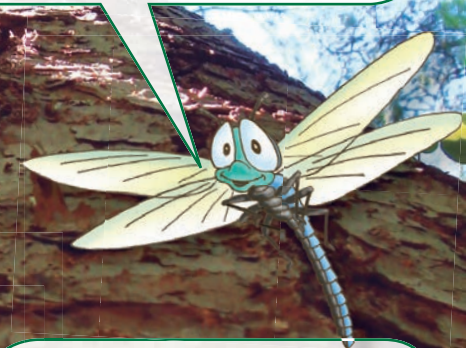
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# The Need for Trees

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!