

## ☐ 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.

## ☐ Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum)



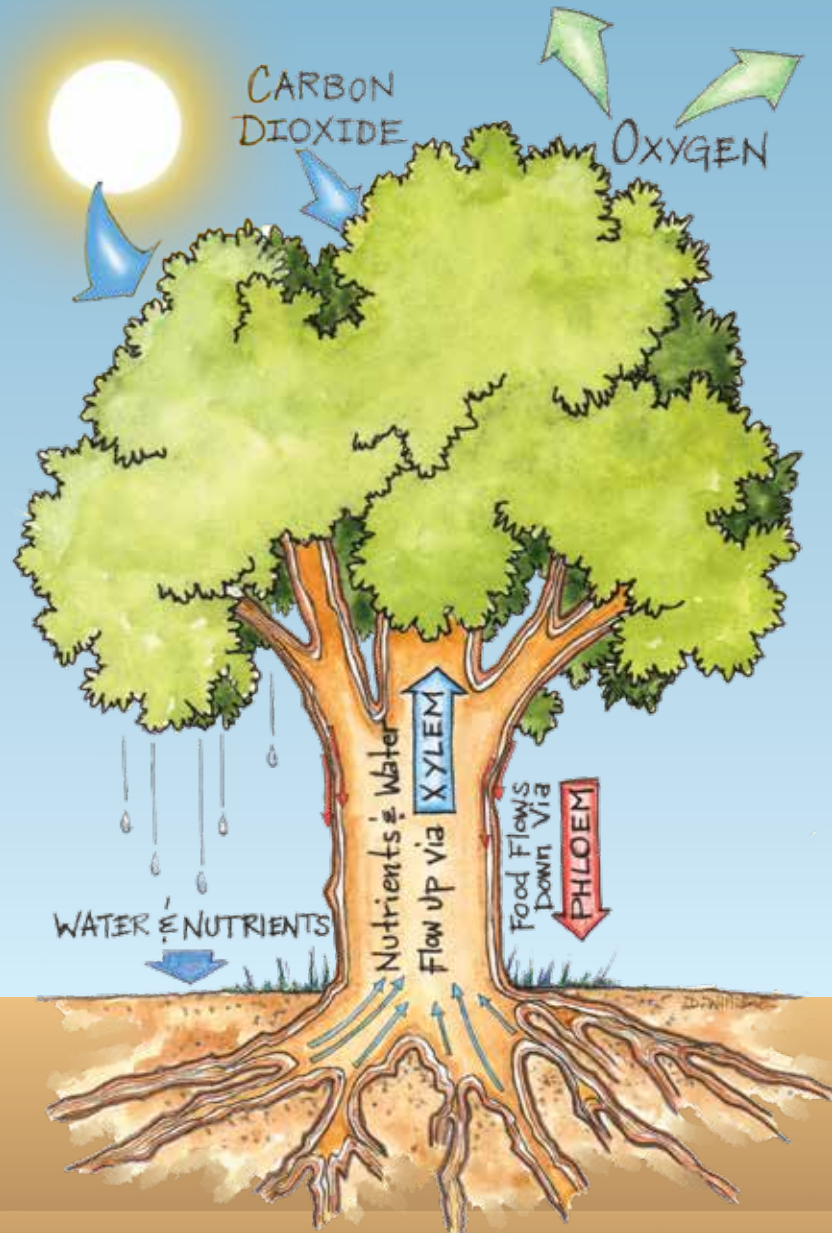
Look for stringy, reddish bark with ridges in a criss-cross pattern. Many bald cypress trees have a wide trunk base for stability during floods. Unlike most conifers, bald cypress trees shed their leaves each winter. Unique to bald cypress, "knees" are roots that have grown upward above the ground and may help anchor the trees in soft soil. Bald cypress trees cause floodwaters to slow down and help trap pollutants.

## ☐ 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.

# 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 is then distributed by way of its phloem to the rest of the tree, so it can grow.

Illustrations drawn by David Williams

## ☐ 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.

## ☐ 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.



# The Need for Trees

Trees are very important to people, animals, insects, fungus, 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 the pictures and text in this brochure to identify and learn about trees. Just remember, for your safety, stay on the trail and be aware of your surroundings. Poison ivy likes to climb up the trunks of trees too... so if you see a hairy vine, Don't Hug That Tree!



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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 4 inches in diameter at chest height.

## Tree Cycle

Most trees will continue to grow until their death. Sometimes, dead trees don't fall to the forest floor immediately. These trees, called snags, play an important role as habitat in the forest. 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, completing the cycle.

Tree Cycle Check List: Can you find a... Seed? \_\_\_ Seedling? \_\_\_ Sapling? \_\_\_ Tree? \_\_\_ Snag? \_\_\_ Fallen Log? \_\_\_