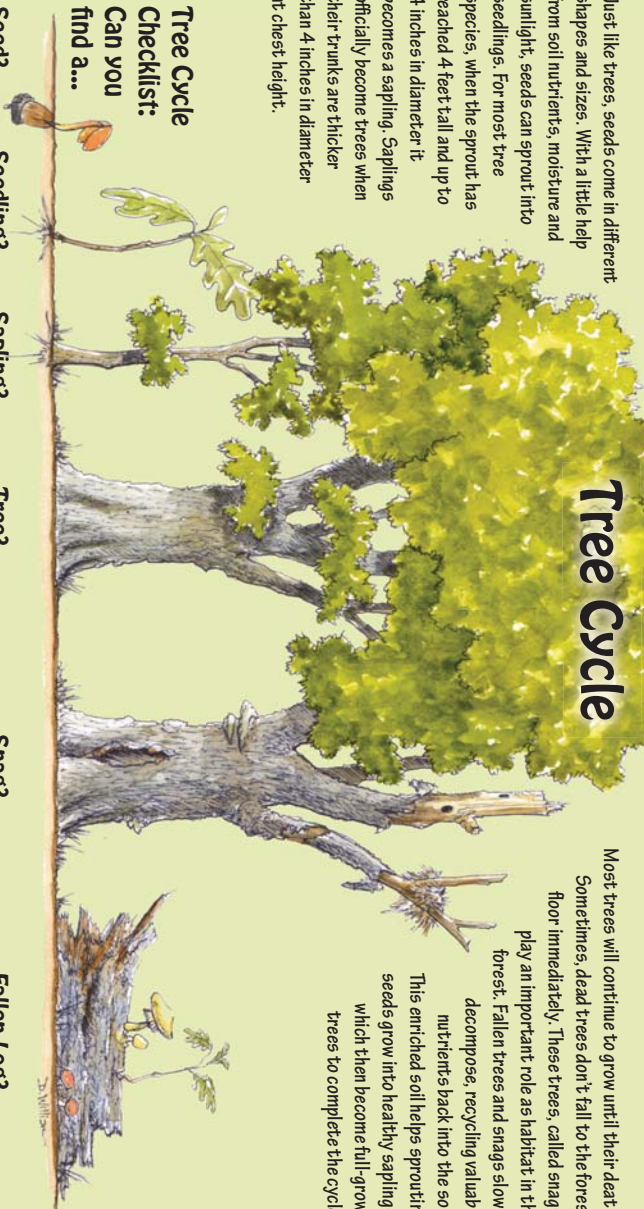


Seed? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Seedling? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sapling? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tree? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Snag? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fallen Log? \_\_\_\_\_



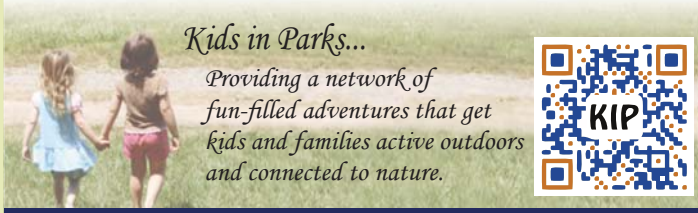
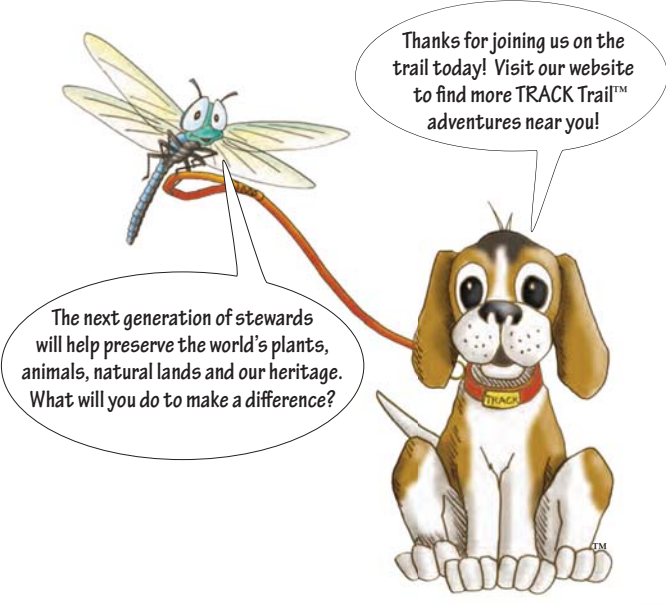
## Tree Cycle

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 4 inches in diameter at chest height.

**Tree Cycle Checklist:**  
 Can you find a...

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 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. 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!



### ❑ 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.

### ❑ Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*)



Unlike most pines, loblolly pines can handle living in wet conditions. The bark is thick, scaly, and dark gray. The needles are in bundles of three and are about six to seven inches long. The pine cones are about the size of an orange, dull brown, and prickly. Seeds of loblolly pine are eaten by many animals including mice, squirrels and birds. Loblolly pines are a prized source of lumber in the Southeastern U.S.

### ❑ Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*)



As you walk down the trail, scan the forest floor for the halved sections of the pignut hickory's nuts. Due to the high concentration of fats, these small nuts are an extremely important food source for wild animals such as squirrels, bears and wild turkey. Because of its relatively high heating value, hickory wood makes excellent fuel wood for stoves and campfires.

## 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

### ❑ Black Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*)



In the same family as dogwood trees, black tupelo trees (also known as blackgum) have blocky, grayish bark. The leaves are oval-shaped and leathery, turning a deep red color in the fall. The small, greenish-white flowers provide pollen for honeybees in the spring, and the pea-sized purple fruits are eaten by a variety of wildlife including bears, foxes, ducks, and songbirds.

### ❑ Red Oak (*Quercus falcata*)



Red oak trees have reddish brown bark with wide gray ridges. The leaves are shiny green and variable in shape, but usually have 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, red oak has long been used by humans for lumber and fuel.

### ❑ Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinus*)



Although its serrated leaves resemble those of an American chestnut, this tree is actually a species of oak. It is also referred to as rock oak because it likes to grow in rocky areas. The bark of a chestnut oak has vertical rectangular chunks. Good acorn crops are infrequent, but when available, the sweet nuts are eaten by deer, wild turkeys, squirrels and chipmunks.