

## ● 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.

## ● Eastern Red Cedar (Juniperus virginiana)



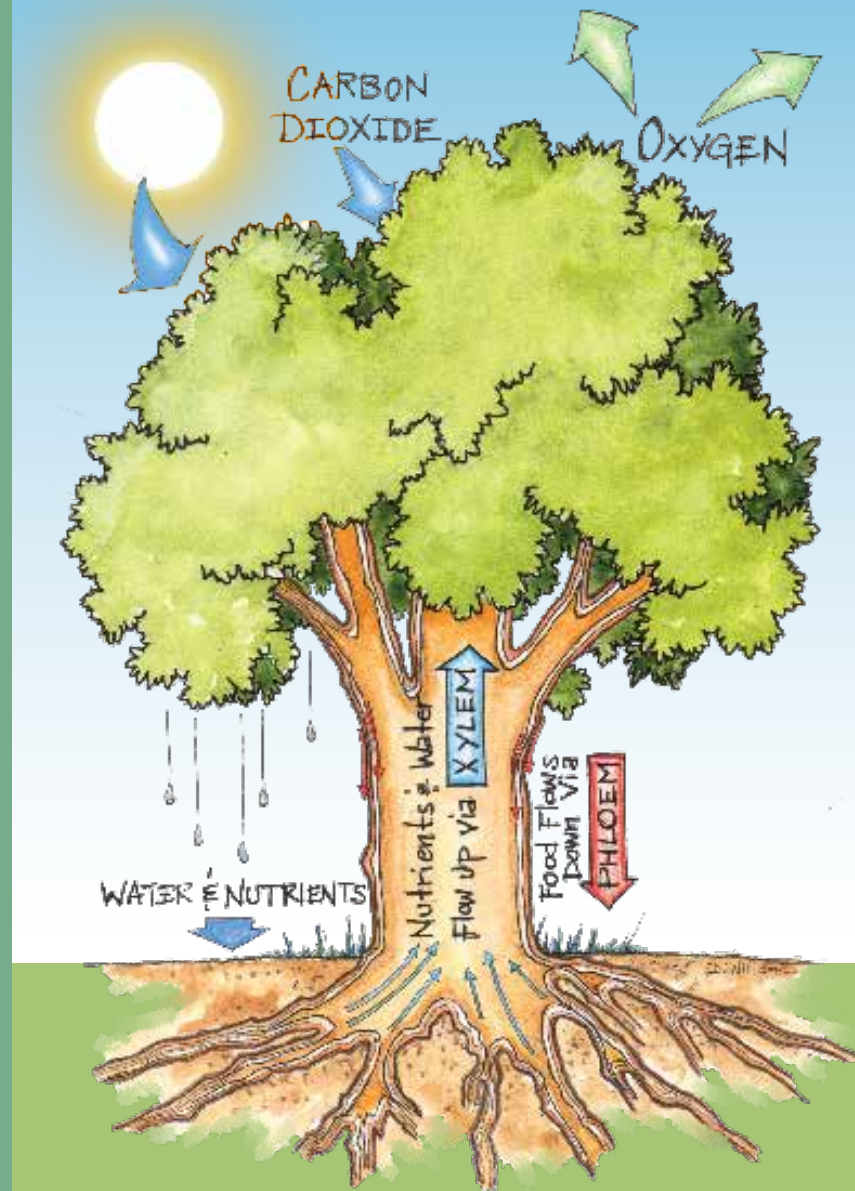
The Eastern Red Cedar is actually in the juniper family and is not closely related to other cedars. Its tough, stringy bark and waxy, scaly needles are designed for survival in very dry conditions. The berries of the red cedar are an important food source for many songbirds. The wood is prized by builders for its rich red color, sweet smell, and weather-resistant properties.

## ● Flowering Dogwood (Cornus florida)



The dogwood is a small, low-branched tree with checkered bark and oval leaves. It likes to grow beneath taller trees and is most recognizable in the early spring when its flowers appear. During the fall, the dogwood will turn bright red before it loses its leaves, and will bear small clusters of red berries. These berries are eaten by many animals from September to December.

# 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

## ● Southern Red Oak (Quercus falcata)



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

## ● 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.

## ● Tulip Tree (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.



# 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 adventure will help you identify six of the most common trees found along this trail

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!



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All trees start out as seeds that will sprout into seedlings.

A sapling is the next stage of a tree's life. Seedlings become saplings when they reach four feet tall.

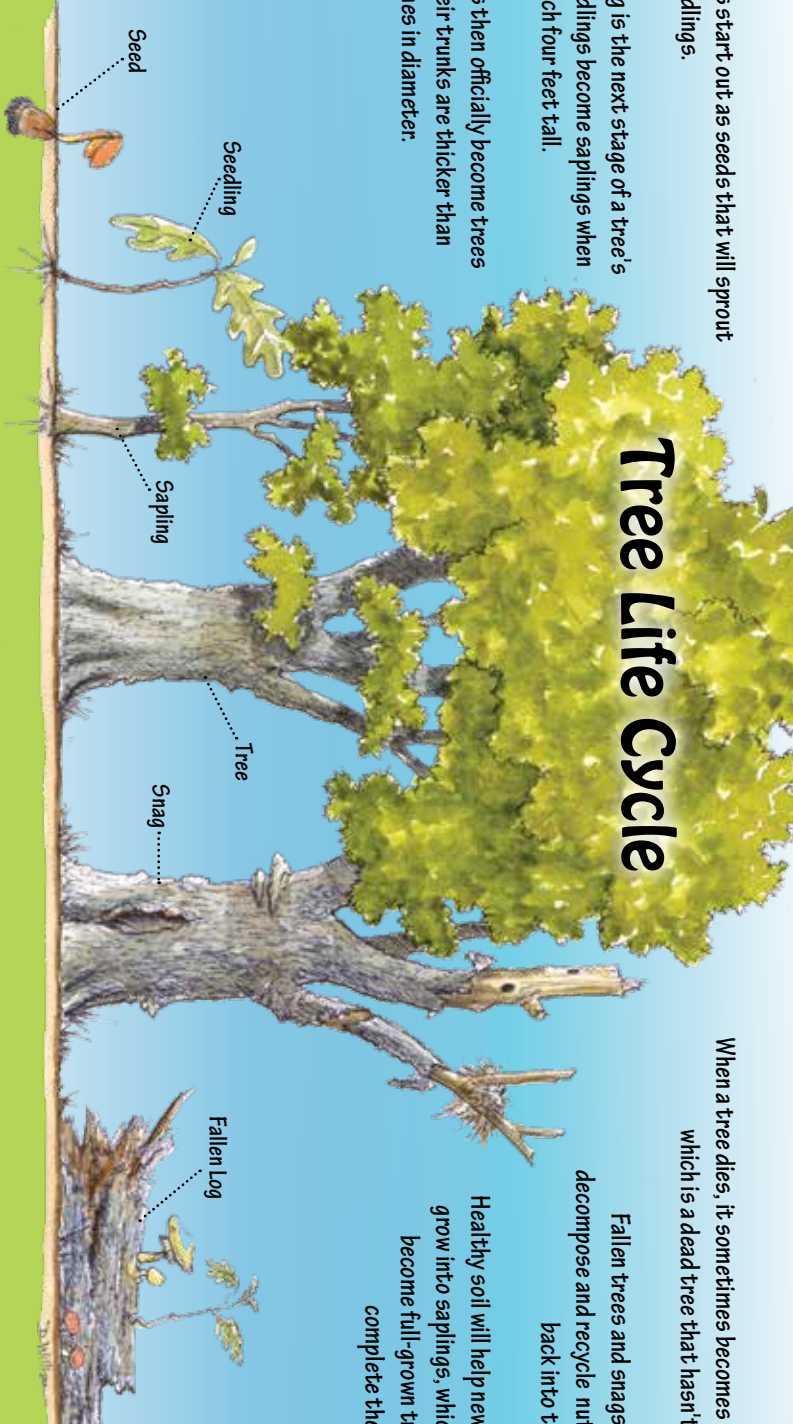
Saplings then officially become trees when their trunks are thicker than four inches in diameter.

## Tree Life Cycle

When a tree dies, it sometimes becomes a snag, which is a dead tree that hasn't fallen.

Fallen trees and snags slowly decompose and recycle nutrients back into the soil.

Healthy soil will help new seeds grow into saplings, which then become full-grown trees to complete the cycle.



Can you find a...

Seed? \_\_\_

Seedling? \_\_\_

Sapling? \_\_\_

Tree? \_\_\_

Snag? \_\_\_

Fallen Log? \_\_\_