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TRACK Trail Partners



Kids in Parks Founding Partners

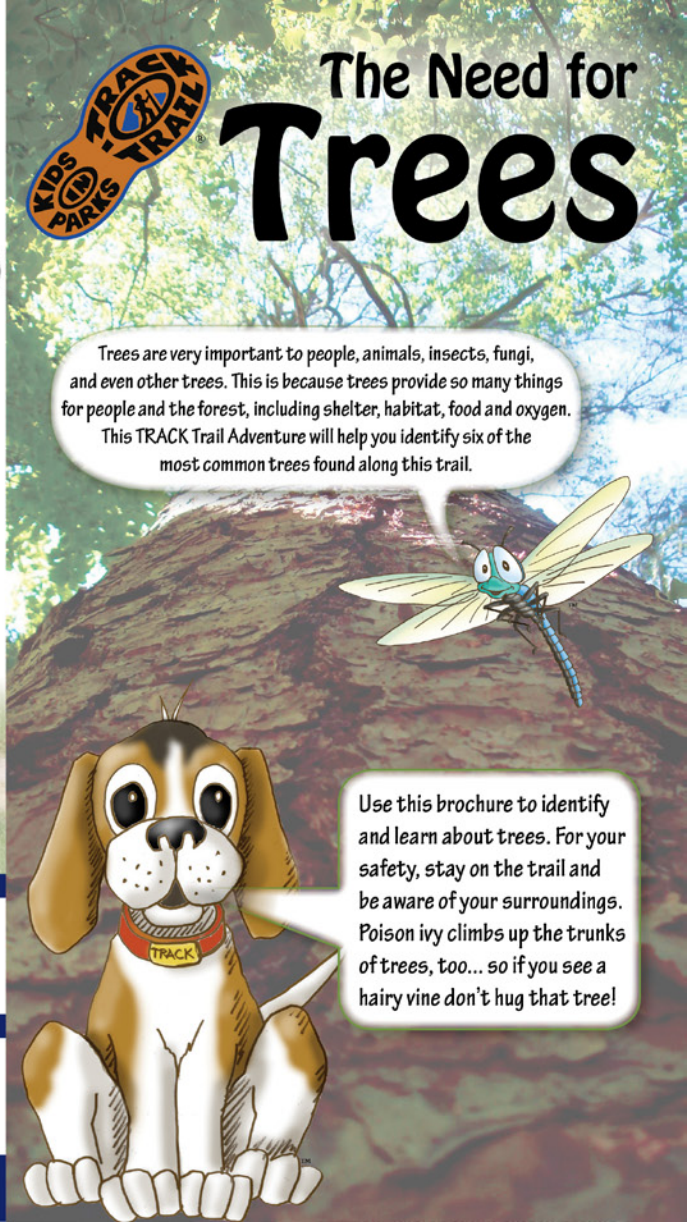


The Need for Trees

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!



Eastern Red Cedar



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.

Yellow Poplar



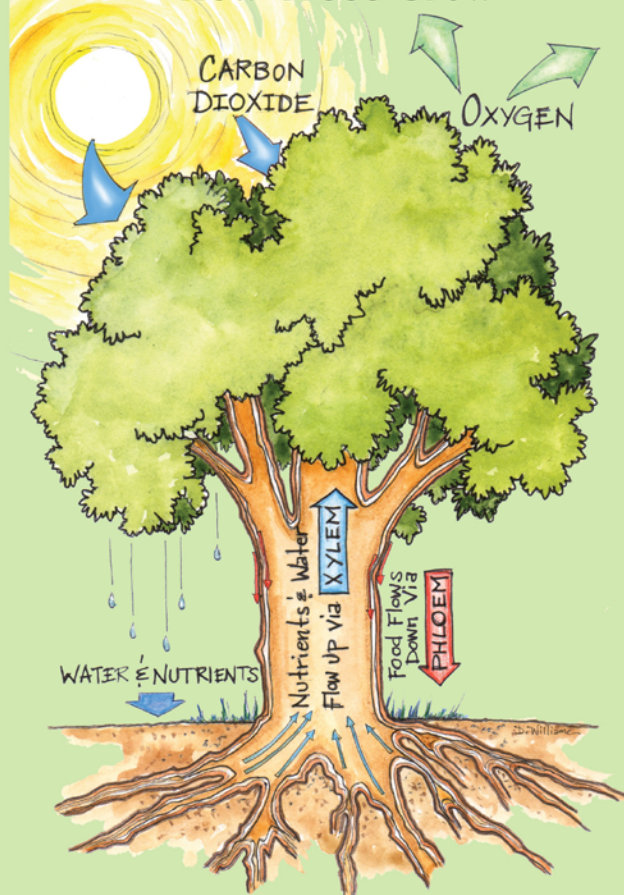
Growing straight and tall with a light gray bark and a large broad leaf that looks like the tip has been bitten off, the yellow poplar is easy to find. Due to its large size and straight growth, this tree provides a lot of useful lumber. Yellow poplar is also a very important tree for honey production.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

River Birch



River birch got its name because it grows 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.

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

Virginia Pine



Virginia pine has light red-brown bark that breaks into small gray plates on full-grown trees. The needles are short (1.5 to 3 inches long) and twisted, and grow in **fascicles** (bundles) of two. The cones are slightly smaller than a chicken's egg and have a long spine on the end of each scale. Virginia pine is a **pioneer species**, which means it is often the first kind of tree to grow in a cleared area.

Redbud



Redbud is a small tree that blooms with beautiful pink or reddish-purple flowers in the spring. It is a favorite ornamental plant along roadsides and in gardens throughout the eastern United States. The flowers are an important source of nectar for hummingbirds and honeybees, and the seeds are eaten by birds, deer and squirrels.

Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)



Flowering dogwood is a small tree that is abundant throughout the eastern United States. The bark of a dogwood has small cubic plates. The white "petals" of the dogwood flower are actually **sepals** (modified leaves), while the true flowers are the small yellow clusters in the middle. The buds look like gray-green chocolate chips. Dogwood trees were historically used to create quinine - a fever reducer.