☐ Chestnut Oak

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.

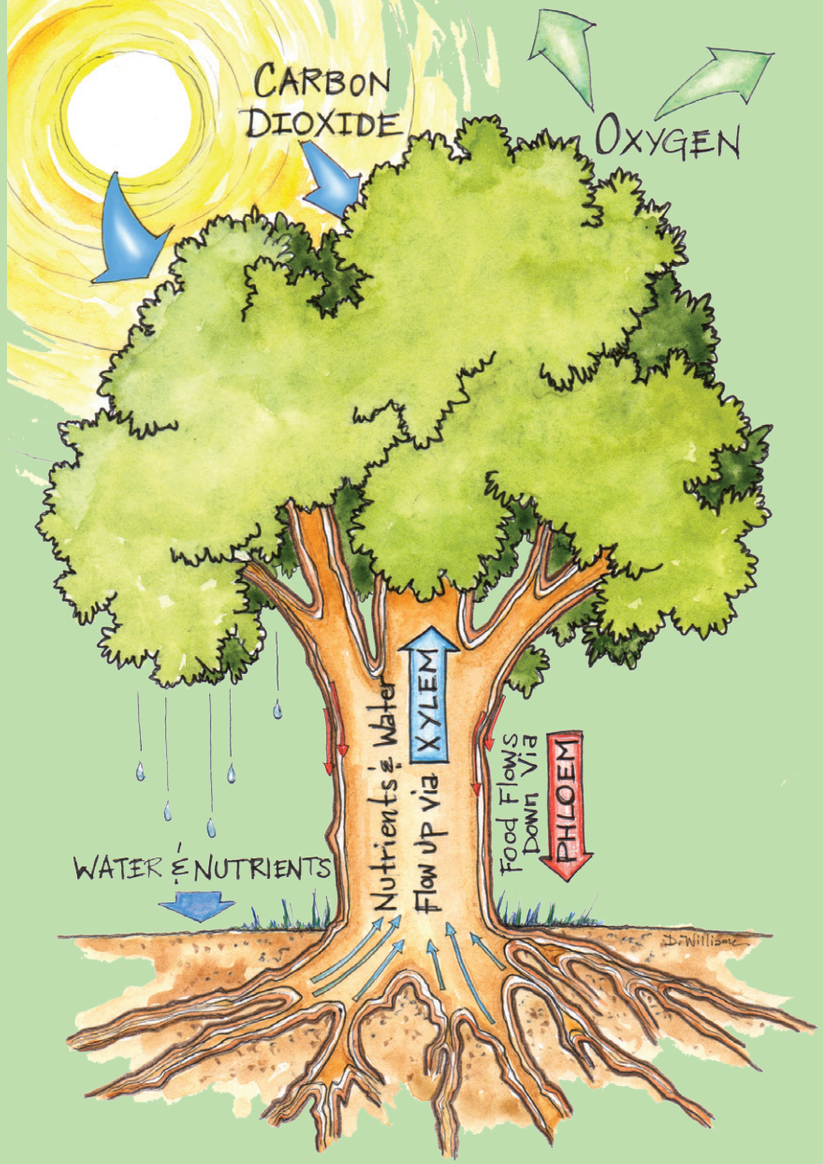
☐ Yellow Poplar

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.

☐ 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.

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

☐ Eastern Red Cedar

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.

☐ Sycamore

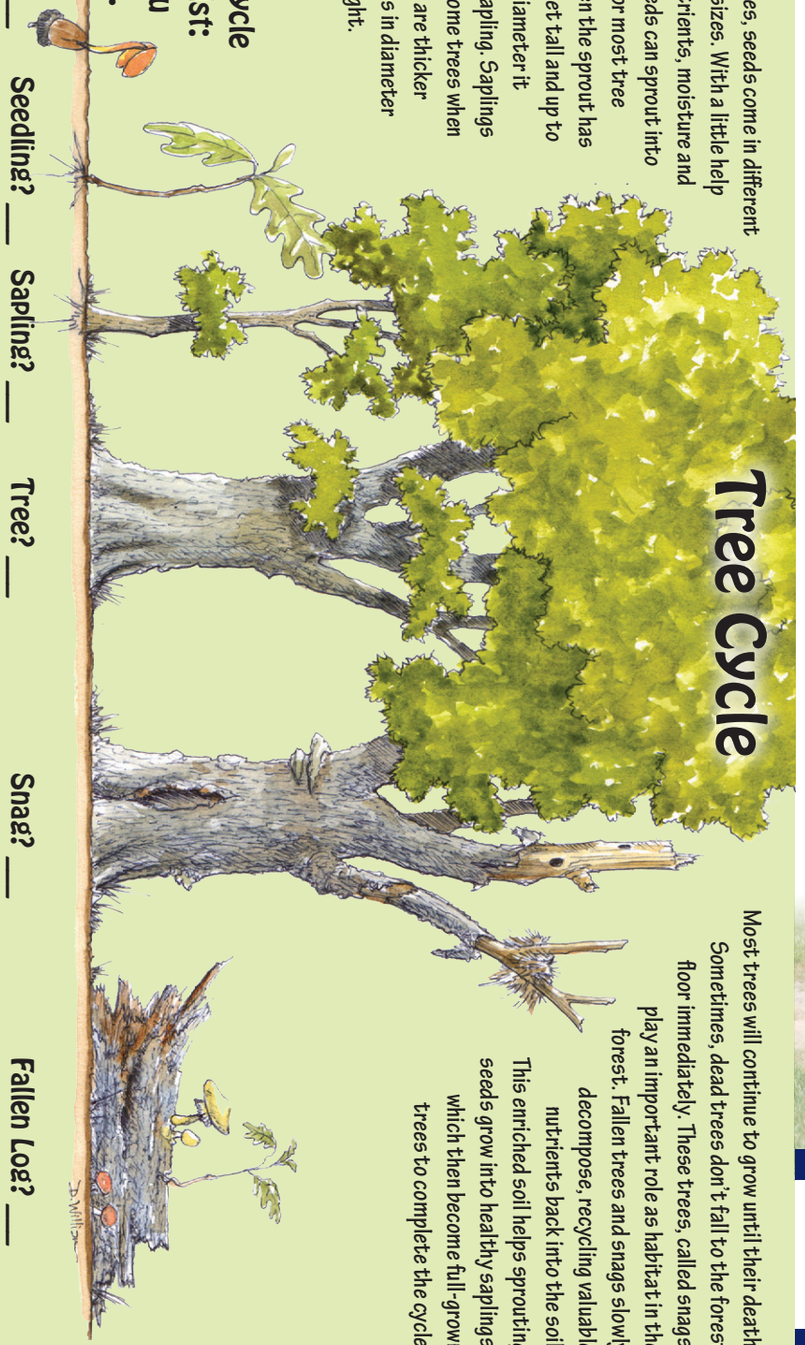
The sycamore is a large, fast growing tree that is easily recognized by its mottled bark, which peels off in large irregular sheets to reveal shades of white, green, yellow, and brown underneath. The sycamore is also known as the buttonwood tree because of its round, pointed fruits (buttonballs). Native Americans used sycamore trees to make a variety of medicines.

☐ River Birch

River Birch got its name because it likes to grow 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.

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...

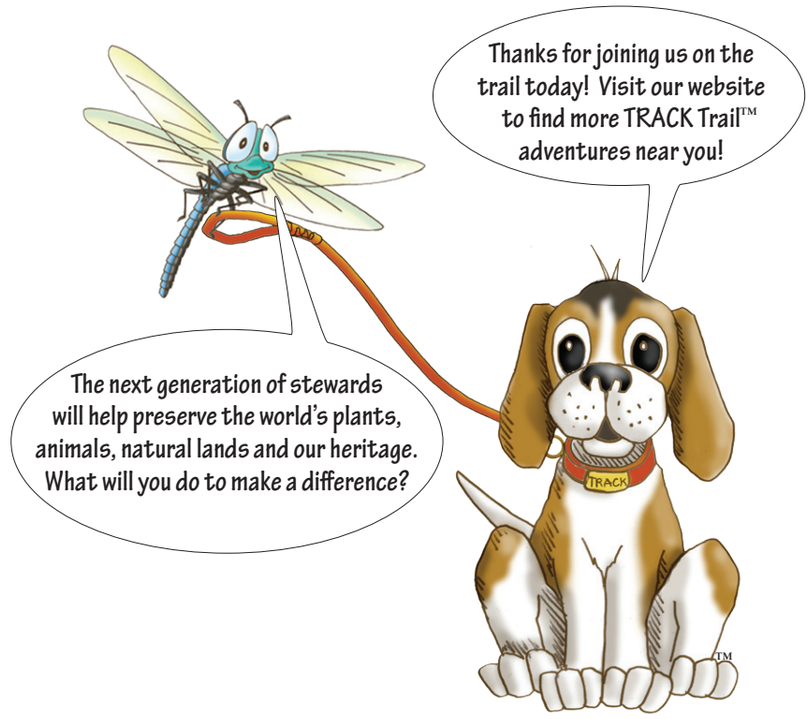
Seed? ___ Seedling? ___ Sapling? ___ Tree? ___

Snag? ___

Fallen Log? ___

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.

TRACK your hike at kidsinparks.com and get FREE prizes!



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The Need for Trees

TRACK TRAIL® KIDS IN PARKS

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 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!

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