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*Providing a network of fun-filled adventures that get kids and families active outdoors and connected to nature.*



TRACK Trail Partners



Kids in Parks Founding Partners



# 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 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!



## Red Maple



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.

## White Pine



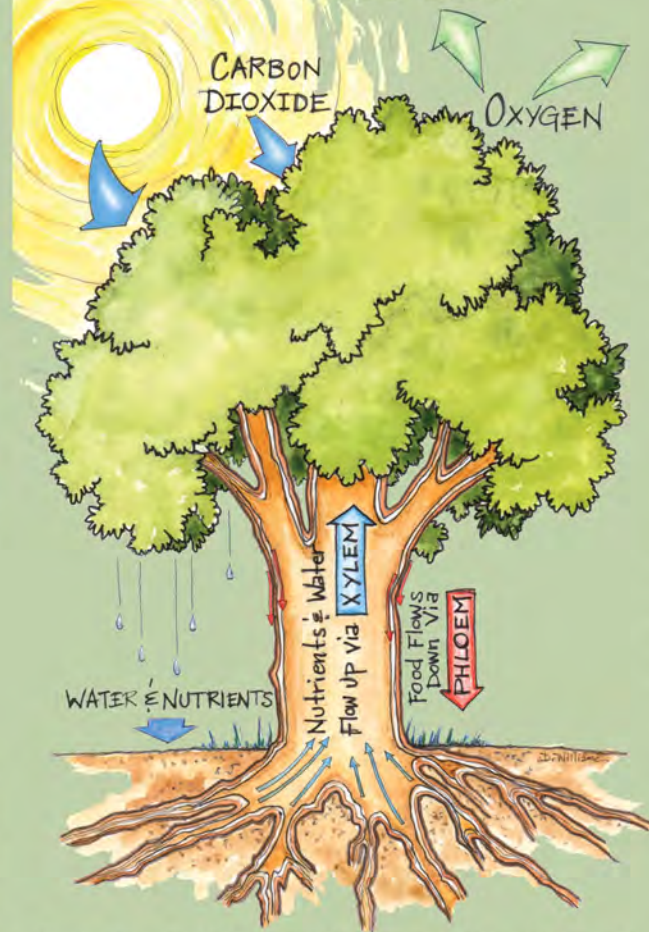
With an extremely straight trunk, needle leaves in fascicles (bundles) of five and long skinny cones, the eastern white pine is easy to identify. This tree has long been used as a source of food and medicine. The needles are high in vitamin C and are used to make tisane, an herbal tea. Deer and rabbits eat the foliage and songbirds and mice graze on the seeds. White pine is also a valuable lumber tree.

## Sassafras



The sassafras is a small tree that can be easily identified by its three distinct leaf shapes (entire, mittened and three-lobed). Although the soft, brittle wood is of little value commercially, its resistance to rot makes it good for use as fence posts and outdoor furniture. In the past, people used the spicy-scented sap to flavor candy, tea and root beer. The fruits are also a favorite food for many birds.

## 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, Wiggins' n Works

## Sourwood



Due to their deeply furrowed, chunky bark and curvy branch growth, sourwood trees are easy to find. In spring, their white flowers hang in clusters from the branch tips, and in fall the leaves turn crimson red. Sourwood lumber is of little value commercially, but sourwoods are an important source of nectar and pollen, which bees use to make a light-colored honey that is prized in the mountains.

## 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 grows well in fire-damaged areas and old fields.

## 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.