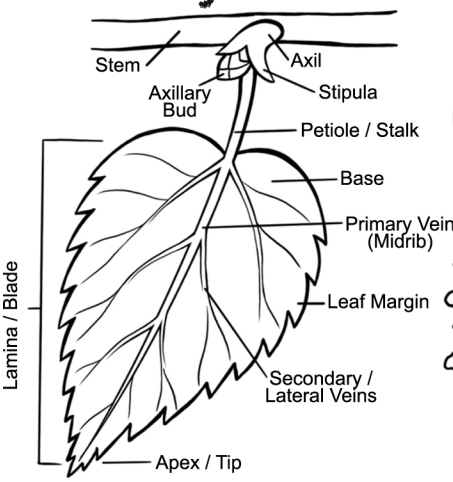
Tree Mystery!

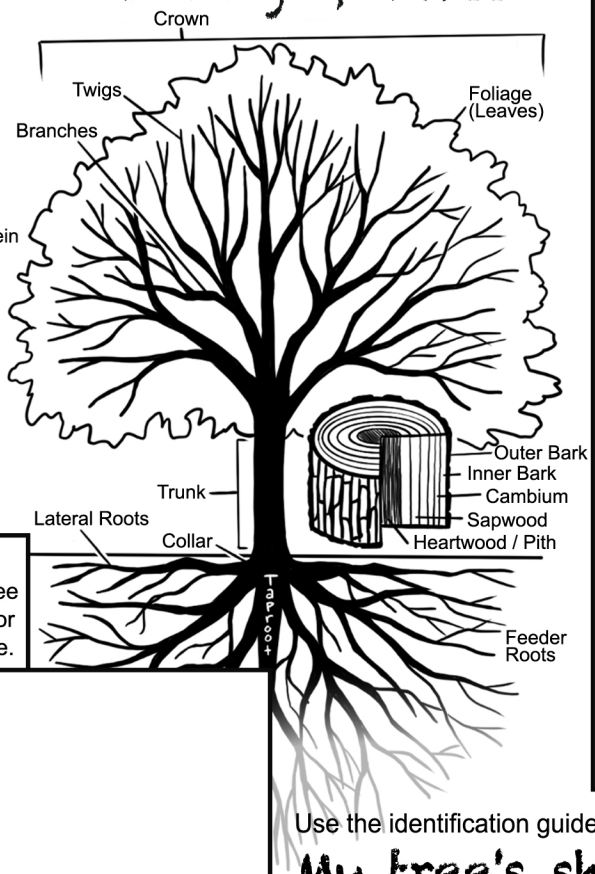
Learn how to itentify trees using field guides and observation.

Trees can be identified through various features, including their leaves, bark, and shape. Collecting information about what your tree looks like helps you search for your own answers and narrow down the possibilities. Most field guides classify each tree based on these features. Use the spaces below to collect information on a tree close to you!

Anatomy of A Leaf



Anatomy of A Tree



Drawing of my tree

Tree Rubbing

Place this paper over the bark of your tree and use the side of a piece of charcoal or crayon to transfer the bark's texture here.

Use the identification guides on the next few pages to help fill out the blanks.

My tree's shape is _____.
My tree has _____ textured bark that is _____ in color.
My tree has _____ shaped simple / compound (circle one) leaves.
The leaves have a _____ arrangement, have a _____ shaped margin, and the venation is _____. I think My Tree's species is _____.
Some other things that I noticed about my tree are:

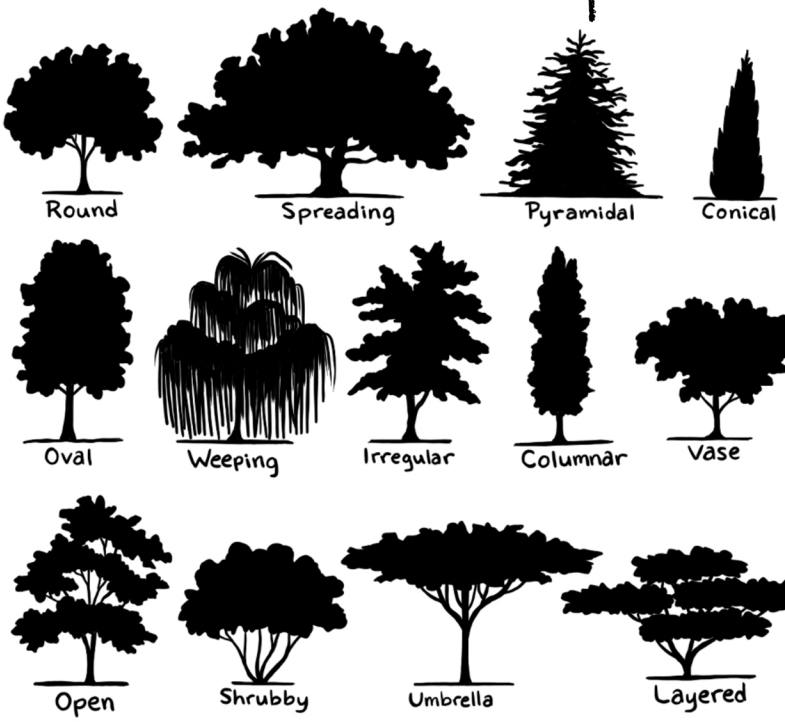
_____

_____

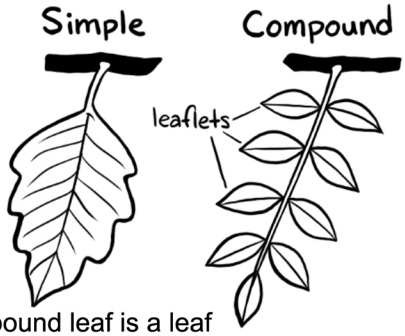
_____

Tree Identification Guide

Common Tree Shapes



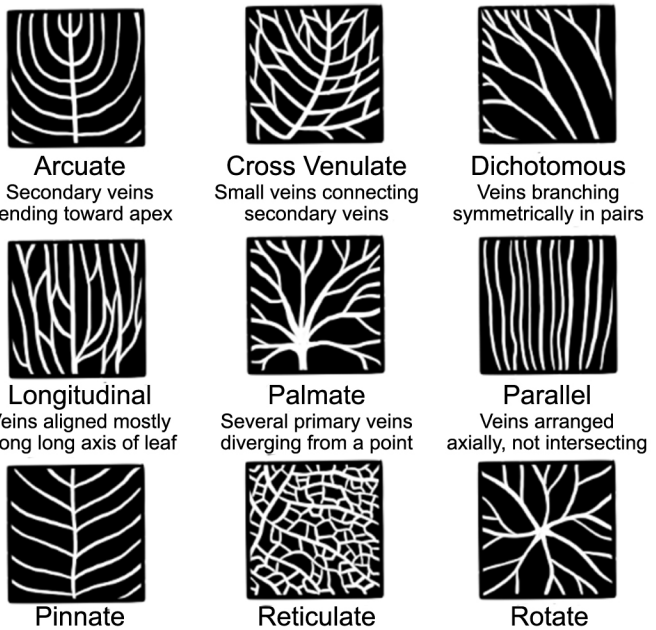
Simple VS Compound Leaves



A simple leaf is a leaf blade that is one piece, although it may be deeply lobed divided or dissected. A compound leaf is a leaf with 2 or more distinct leaflets.

Leaf Venation

The patterns that are formed by the leaf veins.



Arcuate
Secondary veins bending toward apex

Cross Venulate
Small veins connecting secondary veins

Dichotomous
Veins branching symmetrically in pairs

Longitudinal
Veins aligned mostly along long axis of leaf

Palmate
Several primary veins diverging from a point

Parallel
Veins arranged axially, not intersecting

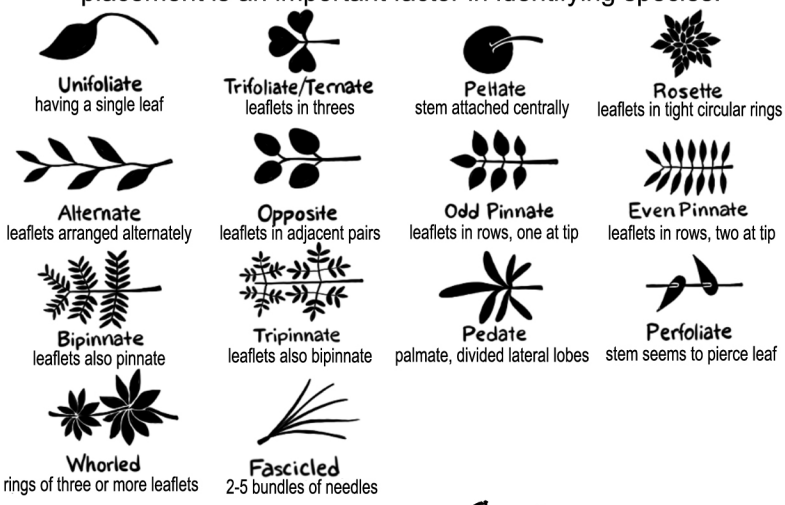
Pinnate
Secondary veins paired oppositely

Reticulate
Small veins forming a network

Rotate
In Peltate leaves, veins radiating centrally

Leaf Arrangement

Compound leaves vary greatly among trees and their placement is an important factor in identifying species.



Unifoliate
having a single leaf

Trifoliate/Ternate
leaflets in threes

Peltate
stem attached centrally

Rosette
leaflets in tight circular rings

Alternate
leaflets arranged alternately

Opposite
leaflets in adjacent pairs

Odd Pinnate
leaflets in rows, one at tip

Even Pinnate
leaflets in rows, two at tip

Bipinnate
leaflets also pinnate

Tripinnate
leaflets also bipinnate

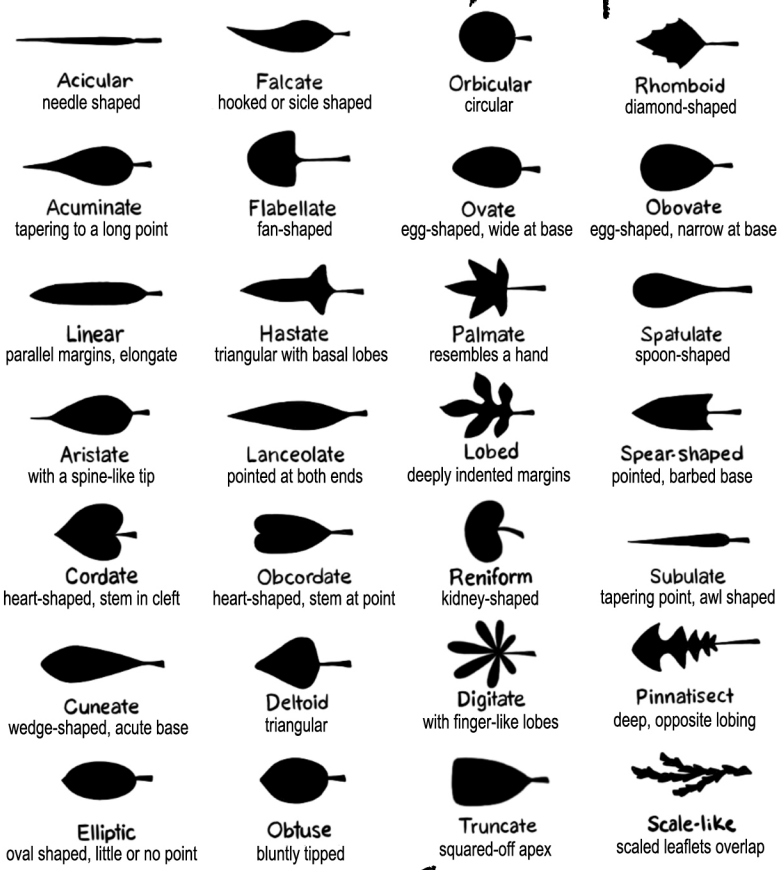
Pedate
palmate, divided lateral lobes

Perfoliate
stem seems to pierce leaf

Whorled
rings of three or more leaflets

Fascicled
2-5 bundles of needles

Common Leaf Shapes



Acicular
needle shaped

Falcate
hooked or sicle shaped

Orbicular
circular

Rhomboid
diamond-shaped

Acuminate
tapering to a long point

Flabellate
fan-shaped

Ovate
egg-shaped, wide at base

Obovate
egg-shaped, narrow at base

Linear
parallel margins, elongate

Hastate
triangular with basal lobes

Palmate
resembles a hand

Spatulate
spoon-shaped

Aristate
with a spine-like tip

Lanceolate
pointed at both ends

Lobed
deeply indented margins

Spear-shaped
pointed, barbed base

Cordate
heart-shaped, stem in cleft

Obcordate
heart-shaped, stem at point

Reniform
kidney-shaped

Subulate
tapering point, awl shaped

Cuneate
wedge-shaped, acute base

Deltoid
triangular

Digitate
with finger-like lobes

Pinnatisect
deep, opposite lobing

Elliptic
oval shaped, little or no point

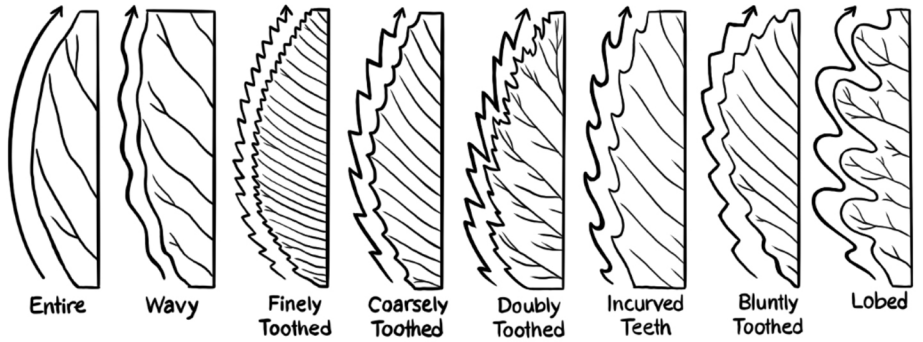
Obtuse
bluntly tipped

Truncate
squared-off apex

Scale-like
scaled leaflets overlap

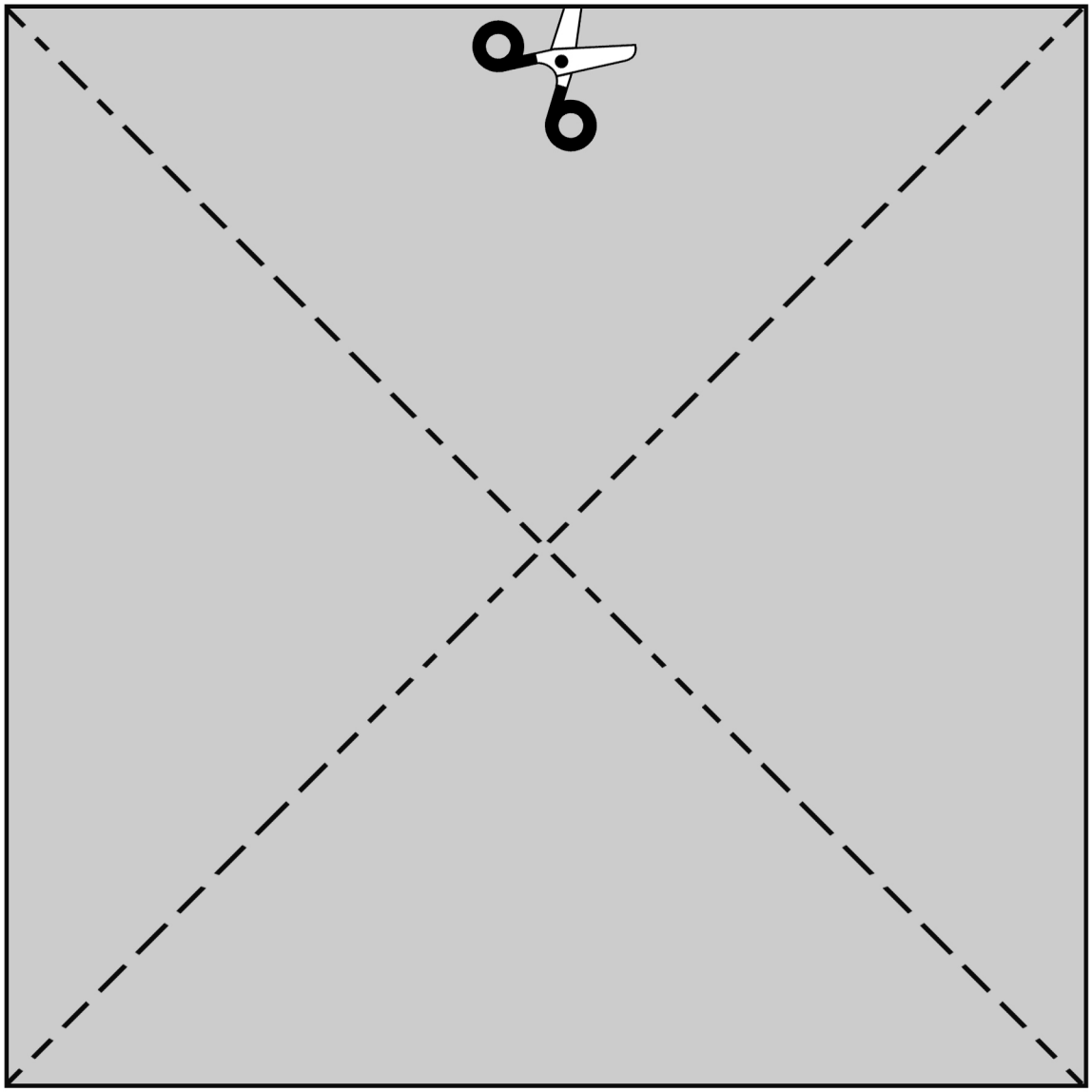
Common Leaf Margins

The edges of leaves have many different shapes and textures.

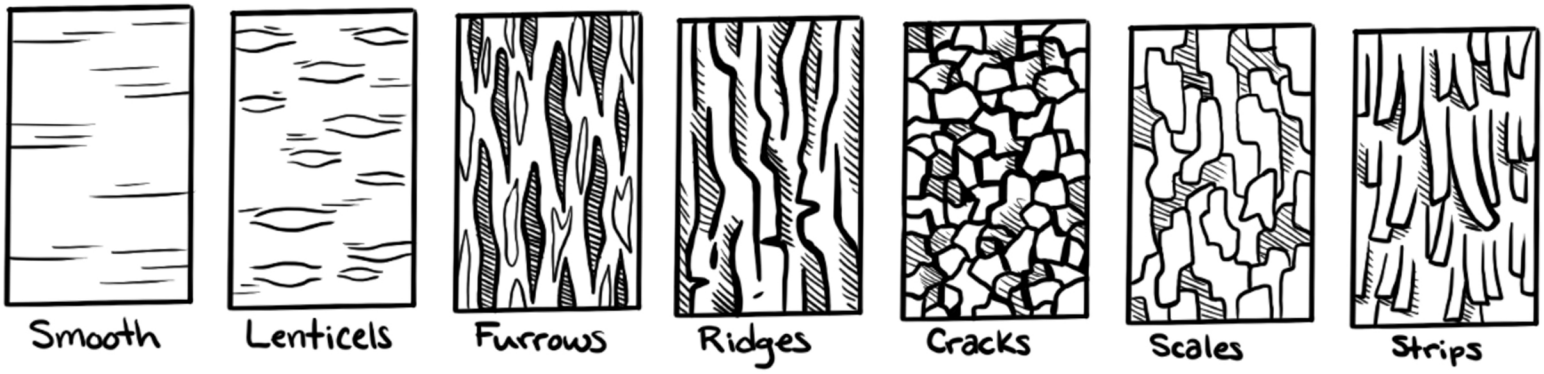


Bark Identification Guide

Carefully cut out the square below and use this sheet as a guide to identify the type of bark on your tree. You may want to paste this page onto thick cardstock or cardboard and attach a popsicle stick to create a bark-viewer.



Common Bark Textures



DIY Herbarium

A Herbarium is a collection of preserved plants that have been stored and arranged for quick reference for scientific research and education.

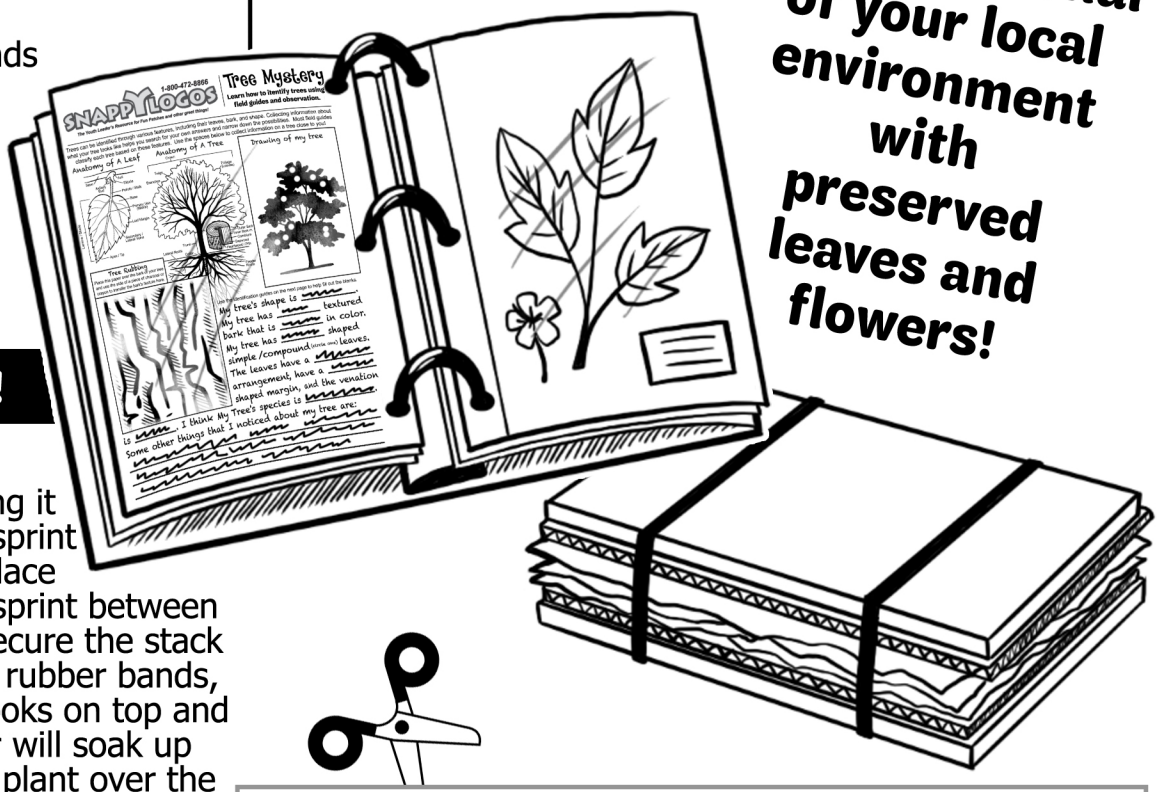
What you will need

Leaf Press

- ☐ 2 Boards or Books
- ☐ 2 Pieces of Cardboard
- ☐ Sheets of Newsprint Paper
- ☐ Plant Specimens
- ☐ 2 Large Rubber Bands

Herbarium

- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Spray Adhesive
- ☐ Label Tags
- ☐ Sheet Protectors
- ☐ Binder



Keep a journal of your local environment with preserved leaves and flowers!

Let's Get Creative!

1 Dry and flatten a plant specimen by sandwiching it between sheets of newsprint paper and cardboard. Place the cardboard and newsprint between two boards or books. Secure the stack together with two large rubber bands, or stack a few heavy books on top and leave to dry. The paper will soak up the moisture within the plant over the next week. The specimen is dry once it now longer feels damp.

2 Once the specimen is dry, coat a piece of cardstock with spray adhesive and press on the plant specimen and completed information tag. Allow the glue to dry completely before sliding the card into a sheet protector.

3 Place the plant specimen sheet, and a page with a description of your find (or use the "Tree Mystery" printable) in a binder.

Name of Plant _____
Where Plant was found _____
Date _____ and Time _____ Plant was found
Notes: _____
_____
_____

Name of Plant _____
Where Plant was found _____
Date _____ and Time _____ Plant was found
Notes: _____
_____
_____

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