

Tree Cookies



Materials

Tree cookies (sliced branches or trunks of trees) – at least 3 or 4 to pass around and look at
Copies of Tree Cookie Project (courtesy of Project Learning Tree and St Joseph County Parks)
Pencils

Instructions:

Describe to the Cub Scouts what tree cookies are and how to read them so that they can complete the “Tree Cookie Project.”

Tree cookies are cross sections of tree trunks or branches that foresters use to illustrate how trees grow. Tree cookies reveal the many different layers that make up a tree. Each layer can tell us something about the tree's life and the climate in which it grew.

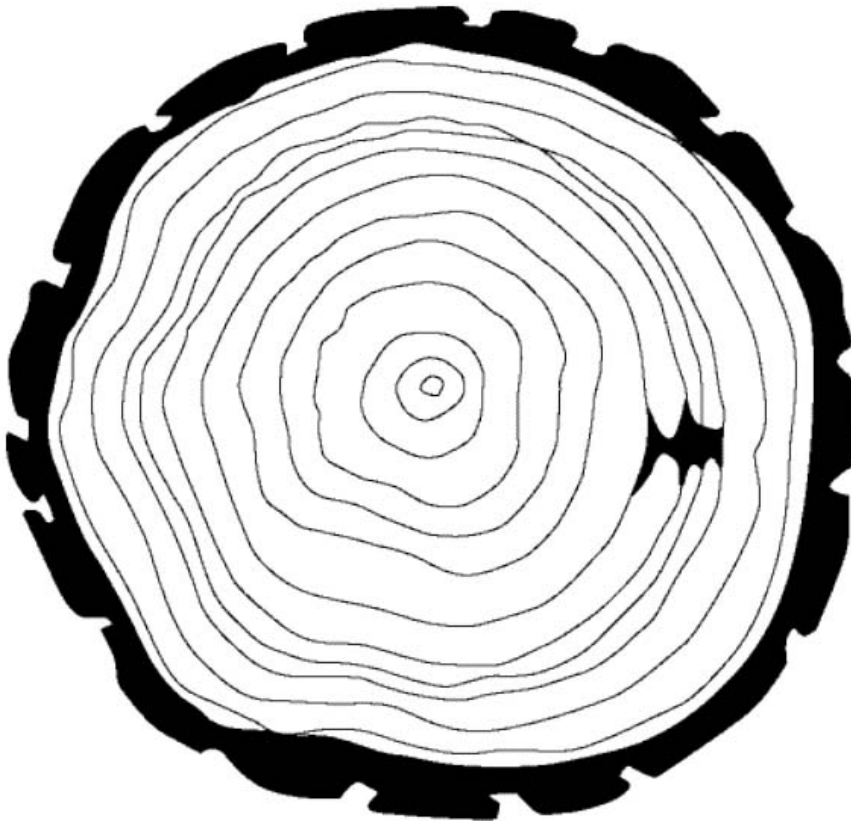
Reading the Rings

To help figure out what climate the tree grew in and what the environment was like, look at each ring:

- **Thickness**
How wide a ring is can tell you if the environment was good or bad for the tree to grow in.
In years when the amount of rain and temperature were good a tree's rings are wider.
In bad years a tree's rings are thinner.
- **Shape**
If rings become thinner on one side than the other it means the tree is leaning over to one side.
High winds or a big storm can cause a tree to lean.
- **Strange Marks**
Look also for strange marks, like scars, and other "*pieces of evidence.*"
Scars can be left by insects or disease. A forest fire can leave burnt marks.

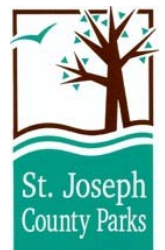
Tree Cookie Project

If you have access to a real tree slice, you can use it for this activity, or use the diagram below.



- 1 Each ring represents one year of growth. How old was the tree when it was cut down?
- 2 Assuming the tree was cut down this year, can you find the ring that represents the year you were born, or when you got your dog, or other family milestone?
- 3 Use push pins with little slips of paper to make your family milestones, or write them on the tree cookie diagram above.
- 4 Can you find any narrow rings that might indicate stress on the tree such as low rainfall?
- 5 Can you find any areas of the tree cookie that look like the tree was damaged? What might have caused the damage?

Diagram courtesy of *Project Learning Tree*. For more information visit: www.plt.org



A Tree is a Good Scout Opening

By Lord Baden Powell

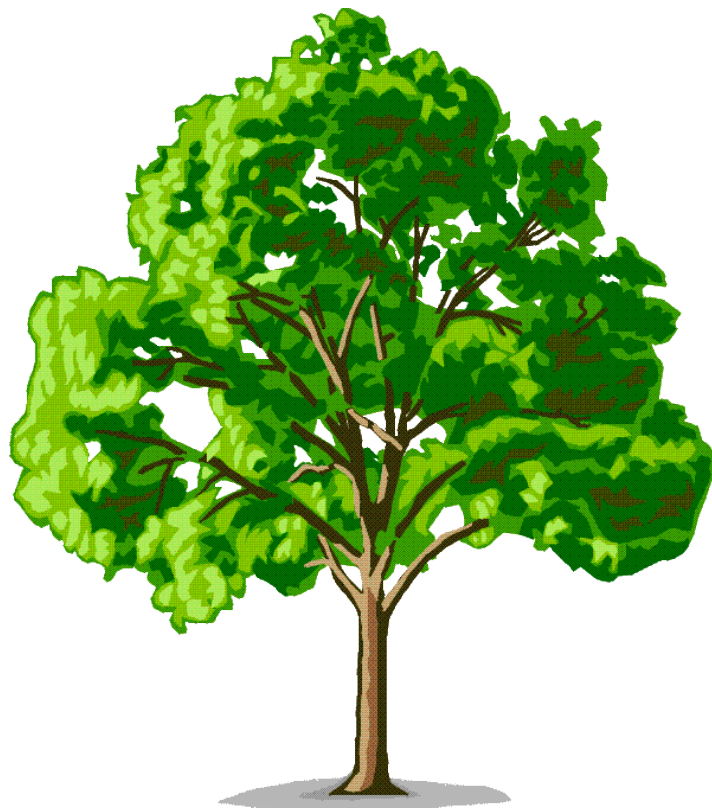
Cubmaster or Den leader:

Did you ever pause to think about how helpful a tree is?

It provides a nesting place for birds, shade from the sun, and protection from the rain. It discards its dead branches, providing wood for building fires and cooking food. A tree adds beauty to the countryside and to camping areas. We much admit that a tree gives a lot more than it receives. We can learn a lesson from the tree—by doing our best to always be helpful to others and by putting our fellow Scouts first and ourselves second.

Remember the lesson we learn from the tree—to give others more than we receive.

Let together say the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Scout Law.



Planting a Seed

Materials:

Disposable cups (one per Cub Scout – two for each Bear - plus a few extra to pour water into cups)

Peat pellet (one per Cub Scout – 2 per Bear)

2 seeds per Cub Scout (4 seeds per Bear – for Bears these need to be vegetable seeds – like peas or cucumber seeds)

Warm water (preferable, but can use cold water – peat pellets will take longer to expand)

Container to carry water

Paper towels

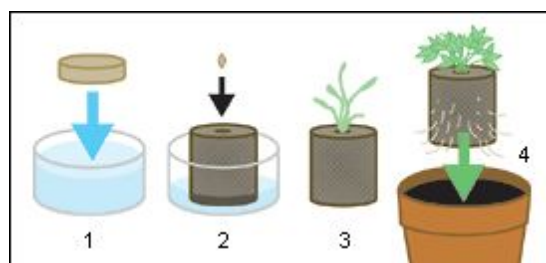
Instructions:

1. Have Cub Scouts put their peat pellet in their cup with the side with the circle and the hole in the top facing up.

2. Add enough warm water to cover the peat pellet in the cup. Watch the peat pellet expand. Add more water as needed until the pellets completely expand. Pellets will grow to 1½ inches to 2 inches tall. The peat pellet will stop soaking up water when they are completely expanded. Drain off any extra water in the cup that did not get soaked up by the peat pellet.

3. When the pellets have reached their full size, have Cub Scouts make two small holes not very deep (or the seeds may not sprout) with their finger (or with the end of a pencil) in the top of the peat pellet. Put the seeds in the holes and then cover the seeds with loosened peat.

4. Cub Scouts will be able to take these planted seeds home. In a few days to a week the seeds should start to sprout. When the peat pellets turn a lighter brown and start to dry out, Cub Scouts can add a little bit more warm water to their cup. This way the seedling will not dry out. As the plant starts to grow the peat pellet can be put into a bigger pot.



Poisonous Plants

(text from Texas Parks and Wildlife)

Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy can be a climbing or trailing vine, a shrub or even a small tree. The leaf edges can be smooth, toothed or deeply notched. New leaves are red in spring and dying leaves are yellow. Fall leaves are yellow, orange and red. The plant produces small, greenish-white clusters of flowers in spring and white, waxy, berry-like fruits in fall. It grows almost everywhere in Texas except for the western Panhandle and in almost any type of environment. Several variations of the old adage 'Leaves of three, beware of thee' proclaim the warning- typical 3-leaf (occasionally 5-leaf) clusters on a single stem identify it. The symptoms of Poison Ivy contact begin to appear between 12 and 36 hours after exposure. They include itchy, burning rash followed by small blisters and in severe cases, large blisters and swelling. All parts of the plant are toxic in all seasons. Burning leaves of Poison Ivy are particularly dangerous because the toxin is carried in the smoke and can cause serious respiratory damage if inhaled.



How to Avoid

The best defense against Poison Ivy is learning to identify the plant and wearing protective clothing. After contact, carefully removing and washing clothing is extremely important because the resin can remain on the garments indefinitely and infect whoever handles them again.

What to Do

If bare skin has been exposed to Poison Ivy, immediately wash the affected area with soap and large amounts of water. This can reduce or eliminate the possible effects. If you were not so lucky as to realize beforehand that you were affected, treatment includes keeping the area clean and dry and the topical applications of hydrocortisone creams and lotions. Staying cool can help the itching. If you experience more than a mild outbreak, it is advised that you seek medical attention, since there are stronger products available by prescription.

Poison Sumac

Poison Sumac reacts very much like Poison Ivy, but it looks very different. It is also usually only found in very wet, wooded regions of Texas, typically in the east. It can be a tall shrub or small tree. The leaves are arranged in pairs of 3 to 6 with a single leaf at the terminal end of the stem. The fruits of the Poison Sumac are a whitish green hanging fruit. There are non-poisonous varieties of Sumac, which appear similar, yet their fruits are red and upright. The same procedures should be followed as for Poison Ivy exposure.



Stackable Cone Trees

Materials:

Stackable Cone tree templates (1 per Cub Scout)

Green Construction paper (1 per Cub Scout)

Glue

Crayons/Markers

Scissors

Rulers

Pencils



Instructions:

1. With scissors, cut out all of the cones in the template.
2. With a pencil, trace all 4 sizes of cones onto the green construction paper. Cut out the green cones with scissors.
3. Decorate the cones with crayons and markers.
4. With left over pieces of green paper, cut 3 strips of paper $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide by 4" long. Glue the ends of these strips together to make 3 small rings.
5. Make the cone pieces into cones by gluing them together on their tabs. Glue all 4 cones.
6. Take the largest cone and stand it up. Place one of the 3 small rings on the top of the largest cone. Then place the next largest cone and place it on top of the ring. Add another ring to the top of the second cone. Place the next largest cone on top of the second ring. Add the last ring to the top of the third cone. Place the last and smallest cone on top of the cones and rings. Glue all the pieces together if you would like.
7. Here's your stackable cone tree!

Variation: This can also be done with scraps of wallpaper, left over scrapbooking paper, etc.

Thank You for the Trees Opening

Materials:

Flag

Cubmaster or Den leader:

Thank you for the trees. Thank you for their fruit to eat and the cool shade they give. Thank you for giving the birds a place to live and the Cub Scouts a place to play. Thank you for the evergreens and the new spring leaves. We feel gratitude for the opportunity to take care of these great gifts.



Let us begin our meeting today by saying the Pledge of Allegiance and then by saying with me the 7 Leave No Trace Principles for Kids.