

# INVESTIGATING THE FOREST TRAIL

AT THE  
AUSTIN NATURE & SCIENCE CENTER



“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



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1<sup>st</sup>

# MEASURING TREES

2<sup>nd</sup>

Find a tree with a trunk as big around as you are tall.

\*Hint - your arm reach across is the same as your height.

3<sup>rd</sup>4<sup>th</sup>5<sup>th</sup>6<sup>th</sup>7<sup>th</sup>8<sup>th</sup>

The ground shaded by a tree's canopy is where its roots live. Count your steps from the trunk to the edge of the canopy.

Walk away from a tree until you are able to look between your legs and see the entire tree. Your distance from the tree is about equal to the height of the tree.





# SEED PODS

Compare and contrast the seed holders that you can find.



Live Oak



Mexican  
Buckeye



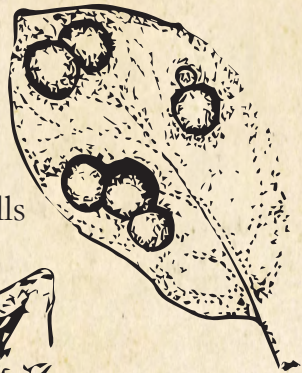
Redbud



Bur Oak

# GALLS

There is something that looks like a seed holder on the live oak leaves, but instead of holding seeds, it holds an insect.



Galls



Galls on a  
Live Oak

# BALL MOSS

This cedar elm provides a home for ball moss and lichen. Neither hurts the tree. Lichen only grows on the surface of the tree's bark. Ball moss, found on shaded branches, grips the tree but does not tap in to the tree's food.



Hummingbird  
with lichen



Ball Moss  
on a Cedar Elm



Find a brown piece  
of ball moss and dip it in  
water. What happens to  
the color?

## SENSORY WORDS

Take a close look at the Texas mountain laurel. Smell it. Touch the glossy leaves. Rub the red seeds. Use sensory words to make a poem that describes this tree.

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# TOUCHING BARK

Feel the bark of the ashe juniper and the lacey oak. Oak trees have scaly bark. Which bark might you find in the nest of the endangered golden cheek warbler? Find a tree along your walk that has smooth bark.



Ashe Juniper bark

## POLLINATORS

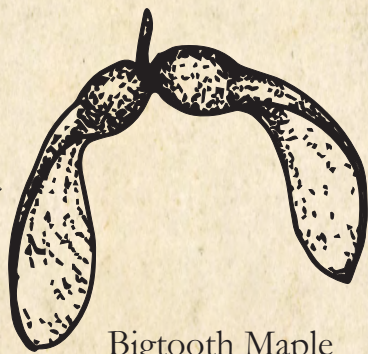


Flowers on the anacacho orchid tree attract nectar feeders like bees and butterflies. Observe pollinators in action during a spring visit.

Anacacho Orchid blossom

## SEED SPINNER

Look for a winged bigtooth maple seed on the ground. If you find one, hold it up high and release it. How does it move as it falls? When you get home, cut out a winged pattern like the seed spinner in this book. Does it move the same way?



Bigtooth Maple seed spinner and leaf.



# TREE INVESTIGATIONS

**Texas Red Oak** - "Trees do not heal; they seal" says Dr. Alex Shigo of the US Forest Service. Look at the wound on this tree and notice how it heals by forming a "callus" around the edges. How does a callus on a tree compare to a scab on your body?

**Anacua** - Touch a leaf. What would you name this tree?

**Texas Ash** - Ash trees in America have an enemy. The emerald ash borer can kill a full grown tree in 2 - 3 years. If you spot a "D" shaped exit hole in an ash tree, contact the Texas A&M Forest Service.

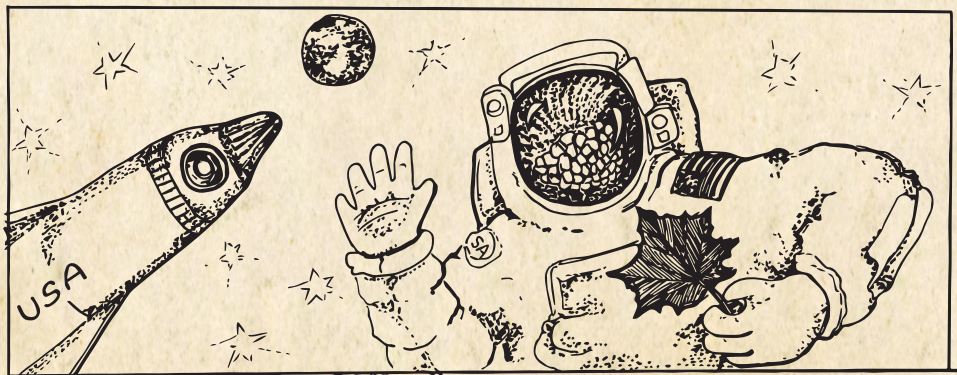
**Red Mulberry** - mulberry leaves are used to raise silkworms while paper has been made from its inner bark.

Silkworms on  
a Red Mulberry Leaf



## MOON SEEDS

This American sycamore was grown from a seed whose mother went to the moon. In 1971, during our third trip to the moon, 500 seeds orbited the lunar surface. Upon returning to Earth, they grew successfully throughout the United States.







Can you ID a tree? Start big and work your way to the smallest detail.

## TREE SHAPE

The overall shape of a tree varies among species. Find trees around the pond with these shapes.



Oval



Columnar



Round



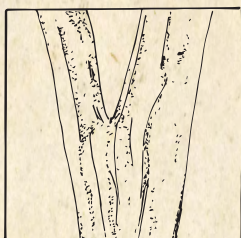
V-Shaped



Pyramid

## LOOKING AT BARK

The look and feel of bark is very different between species. Can you find trees on the Forest Trail with bark like this?



Smooth



Plates



Broken Ridges



Peeling Strips



Horizontal Pores



Intersecting Ridges



# EXAMINING LEAVES

Look for the bud at the base of each leaf. Can you find trees on the Forest Trail with simple leaves? How about leaves that are compound? Do the trees near you have opposite leaves or alternate leaves?



Palmately  
Compound



Compound

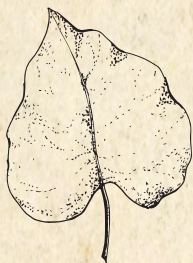


Simple with a Bud



Bi-Pinnately Compound

Can you find trees on the Forest Trail whose leaves have these shapes?



Heart



Deltoid



Linear



Oval



Elliptical

The trees along the Forest Trail are all native to Central Texas. Please feel free to pick up a tree poster and find out which of these trees could be added to the “forest” of your own backyard.