

# At Home with Nature

Nature doesn't just happen in a park; it can happen right at home!



A resource for **PRE-KINDERGARTEN** and **EARLY ELEMENTARY AGE CHILDREN** so they may feel right **AT HOME WITH NATURE.**

## TREEmendous TREES!

Videos, activities, stories and songs celebrating our planet's tallest living things - TREES!

### Let's Get Started

*Discover why trees are truly TREE-mendous!*

[https://youtu.be/F9IY\\_qUGYAM](https://youtu.be/F9IY_qUGYAM)



### Literacy Connection

*Enjoy the poem "The Tall Oak Tree" and discover some animals that depend on trees for both food and shelter.*

[https://youtu.be/vXC6\\_Y6lew0](https://youtu.be/vXC6_Y6lew0)



### Music and Movement

*Sing along and guess the creatures who live within the branches of trees.*

<https://youtu.be/0j7VNX4uJ6c>



### Math Connection

Younger children can **count backwards** as leaves fall from the tree in the autumn wind.

[https://youtu.be/3lXB\\_1Sa2yM](https://youtu.be/3lXB_1Sa2yM)

Older children can **count and tally** tree seeds and leaves.

**Directions are below.**



### Creative Expression

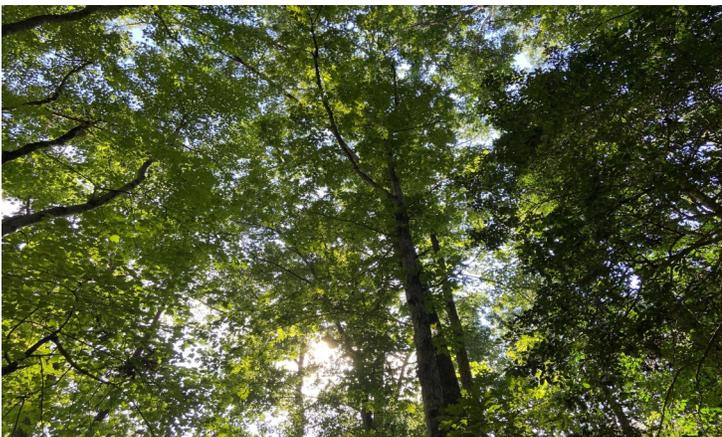
**Bake a batch of TREE COOKIES!** Create a **tree costume** and become a tree!

**Directions are below.**

### Let's Explore Outdoors

**Take the learning outdoors** with memorable family activities.

**Details are below.**



# Math Connection



## Collect, Count and Create!

Collect tree seeds and tree leaves that have fallen to the ground.

Notice the different shapes of the leaves that you found. Which leaves are the most colorful?

Count the leaves you found. Arrange the leaves from smallest to largest. Notice that some leaves are single leaves with one stem - **SIMPLE LEAVES**, while others have leaf pieces

attached to one stem - **COMPOUND LEAVES**.

Make two piles - one with simple leaves and the other with compound leaves. Use paper and a pencil to tally the number in each category. Compare the total number in each category.

Notice the different shapes of the tree seeds you found. Are some of your finds actually seed holders rather than seeds? Count the tree seeds you found. Arrange

the tree seeds from smallest to largest. Tree seeds need to move away from the parent tree so the new seedlings have enough space to grow well. Decide how each of the seeds you found might move away from the parent tree: roll away, attach to an animal's fur or float away in the wind. Use paper and pencil to tally the number in each category. Compare the total in each category.

Now, use your tree treasures to create leaf and seed pictures! Leaves and seeds can be attached to paper or simply arranged on a surface.



# Music and Movement



## A Tree is Home!



**A tree is home for creatures,** (extend your arms over head like a tree)  
**Big and small.** (reach up high and then crunch into a small ball)  
**Be sure to look real close** (pretend to look through binoculars)  
**So you can find them all.**

**Here's a nest for robin.** (make a nest with your hands)  
**Here's a hive for bee.** (clasp hands together)  
**Here's a hole for squirrel.** (make a small circle with your fingers)  
**Peeking out at me.** (look through circle made with your fingers)

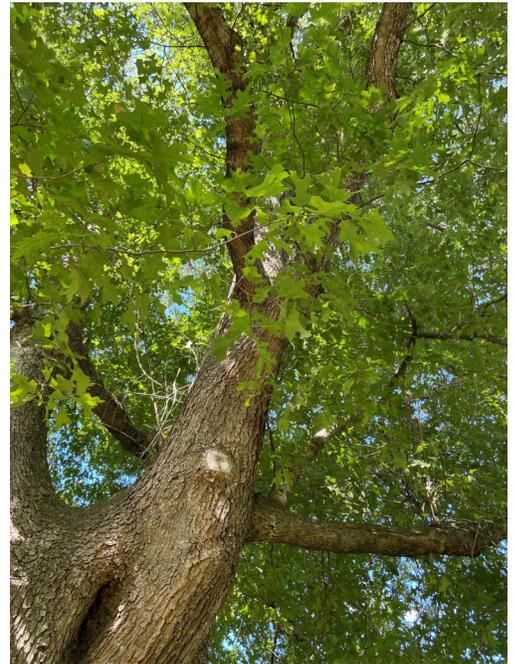
## Guess Who?

**After flying high, I need a place to rest.**  
**On the branch of a tree is where I build my nest.**  
**Squishy worms and grubs, I munch on eagerly.**  
**So be kind to a tree, it is a home for me.**

**I scamper through the branches gathering my dinner.**  
**If I am disturbed, you will surely hear me twitter.**  
**A hollow in the trunk becomes my treasury,**  
**So be kind to a tree, it is a home for me.**

**You might find me sleeping on a bright and sunny day.**  
**When nighttime comes around, it's time to wake and play.**  
**Mice taste delicious; I'm not sure if you'll agree.**  
**But be kind to a tree, it is a home for me.**

**I hide in the branches and look just like a stick.**  
**If you don't look closely, I'll give your eyes a trick.**  
**You may not even notice, I'm chewing on a leaf.**  
**So be kind to a tree, it is a home for me.**



# Creative Expression



## Family Fun - Bake Tree Cookies!

### Materials Needed:

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp *nutmeg*
- 1/2 tsp *cinnamon*
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup softened butter
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 tsp *maple* extract
- 1 tsp vanilla extract



### Cookie Topping:

- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1/4 tsp ground *nutmeg*

### Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Mix the flour, nutmeg, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Set aside.
- In a separate bowl, cream butter and sugars. Add the egg, maple extract and vanilla extract.
- Combine the wet and dry ingredients.
- Drop by heaping tablespoons onto a baking sheet that has been lined with wax paper.
- Bake for 8-10 minutes.
- Stir together topping ingredients and sprinkle over cookies as soon as they are removed from the oven.
- Remove cookies from the baking sheet and cool.

**Cinnamon** – Cinnamon comes from the bark of the cinnamomum tree. Farmers remove the outer bark off the tree, then shave off the inner bark - the cinnamon layer. As it dries, the cinnamon curls into quills which are cut into sticks or crushed into powder.

**Nutmeg** - Nutmeg comes from the seeds of myristica trees.

**Maple Extract** – Pure maple extract is made from the sap of maple trees.

# Creative Expression



## Become a Tree!

### Materials Needed:

- Yarn Pieces
- Paper Grocery Bag
- Scissors
- Heart Sticker or Paper Heart
- Leaves (cut from paper)
- Hole Punch
- 2 Chenille Stems (connected to make one long piece)



Begin by placing yarn pieces in your shoes or socks to represent **tree roots**. Roots take in water for the tree. Make a slurping sound!

The roots bring water into the woody trunk of the tree. On the outside of the tree trunk is protective tree bark. You may put on a jacket or sweater to represent **tree bark**. Or you can create a tree bark vest using a paper grocery bag. Use scissors to cut the bag as shown here.



Once you put on your tree bark vest or jacket, your body becomes the trunk of the tree. A tree's trunk supports the tree. At the very center of the trunk, beneath the bark is special wood called the **heartwood**. Put a heart sticker or heart shape cut from paper on your shirt to represent heartwood.

Branches grow from the trunk. Stretch your arms like tree branches. What is attached to a tree's branches? Yes, **leaves**! The leaves are the food making part of the tree. Cut leaves from paper and use a hole punch to put a hole in the top of each one. Place each leaf on the chenille stem. Once all the leaves are attached, bring the ends of the chenille stem together and twist. Now place your leaf crown on your head!

# Let's Explore Outdoors



## A Tree Picnic

Sit beneath the shade of a favorite tree and enjoy a **TREE PICNIC** - foods that come from trees! Enjoy fruits like apples, cherries, bananas, oranges and other tree fruits. Enjoy nuts like almonds and walnuts. Enjoy “tree cookies” made with maple extract as well as cinnamon and nutmeg, both spices that come from trees. If you happen to picnic using paper plates and napkins, thank a tree for these gifts.

## Many Gifts!

Begin by walking through your home and identifying all the different “tree objects” you can find. Make a word or picture list of all the things that come from trees. From wood furniture and doors... to baseball bats... to rubber bands made from latex... to the many items made from paper... our lists are long ones!

Sit under a tree and read **The Giving Tree** written by Shel Silverstein.



# Let's Explore Outdoors

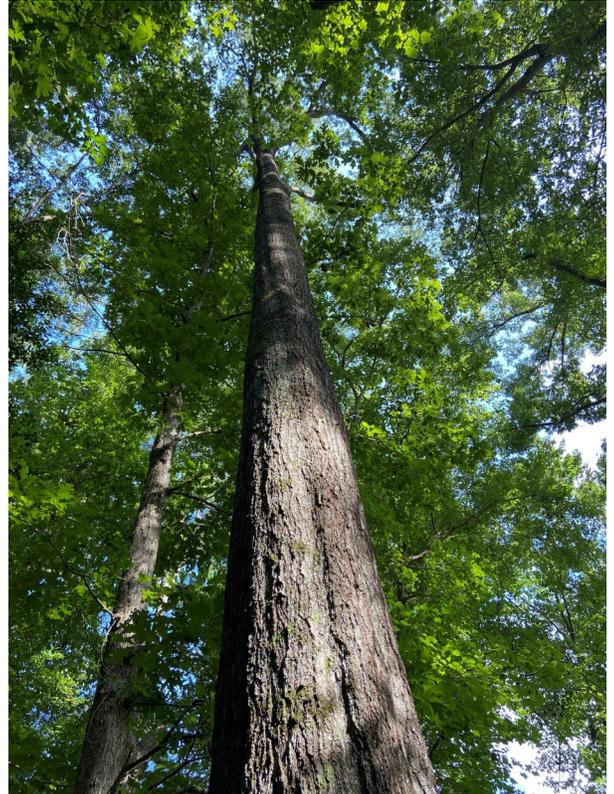


## Meet a Tree!

Get to know a tree near your home. Choose a tree that is easily accessible. **Look** closely at the tree's bark and its leaves. **Listen** to the tree. Does it make sounds? Sit quietly beneath the tree and listen for animals that may live in its branches. Put your ear to the tree's bark and listen to the inside of your tree. **Touch** the bark of the tree. How does it feel? **Smell** the bark and leaves. What do these smells remind you of?

Draw a picture of your tree. Hang this picture in your home.

Visit your tree in each season and observe how your tree has changed.



## Look Closely!

Look closely at a tree stump or dead log. Do you see creatures or plant life on the log or beneath the bark? These creatures are called decomposers. They live in, tunnel through and chew upon the dead log and turn it into soil!