Illinois 4-H | Spark Ideas. Ignite Possibilities.

Do you want to:
- Know the basic facts about trees?
- Be able to identify the trees in your area?
- Learn about pest management in forestry?
- Participate in tree surveys?
- Learn which trees are hardwood, softwood, deciduous, or conifer?
- Learn how trees benefit the environment?

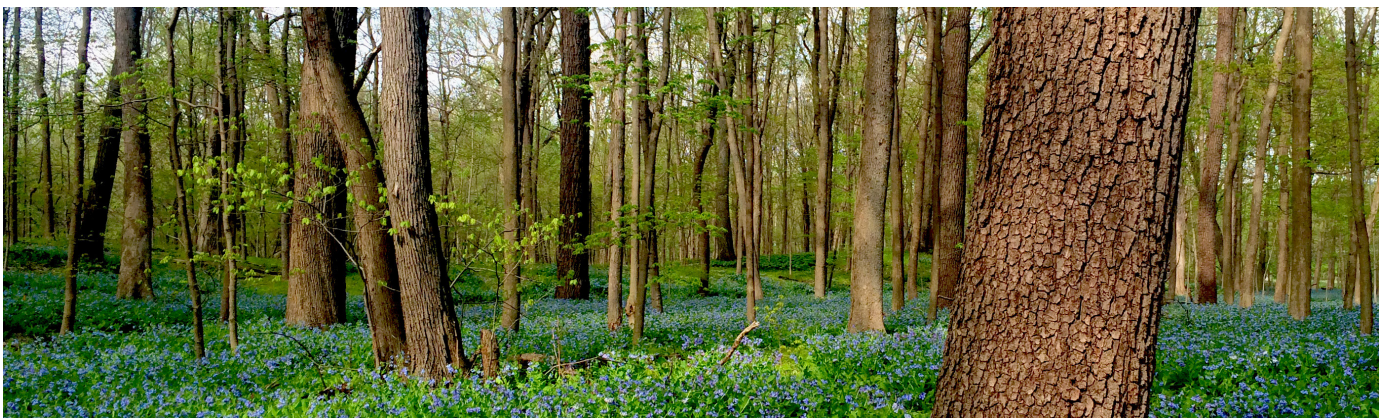If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this project is for you!

Exploring 4-H Forests of Fun
Spark Activity: Leaf & Bark Art

You've probably learned about a tree or two from what kind of leaf it has during the summer. Trees that lose their leaves in the fall are called "deciduous" trees and their leaves are often broad and flat. A fun way to do a leaf collection is to press a leaf flat, then let it dry and display it in a clear, plastic folder. To make your collection more interesting, you can coat another leaf of the same tree in paint and make an impression or print of that leaf by pressing the painted side onto a sheet of plain paper, creating an artistic leaf imprint.

Now take this effort even further with "bark art". Take a piece of white paper and a dark colored crayon or even chalk or charcoal. Hold the paper against the tree and rub the crayon or charcoal firmly on the paper. Soon, you will see the unique pattern of the bark come through. You can learn to identify trees now in the winter without their leaves!

4-H Project Levels and Goals

Beginner
- Classify types of trees
- Identify types of forests, trees, and forest products
- Decode a tree's rings
- Learn about transpiration

Intermediate
- Describe growth stages
- Identify and record insect damage
- Know the parts of a leaf
- Identify infectious and noninfectious tree diseases

Advanced
- Create a community forest map
- Identify forestry jobs
- Determine the history of a neighborhood tree
- Mentor youth in tree survey activities

Put Your Project Into Action

Show Your Skills
- Make a tree identification poster and share with others in your community
- Develop a display for your local park or community on forest diseases
- Create a community forest map or tree survey for your community to use

Service and Leadership
- Adopt and maintain a tree at a park or camp
- Volunteer at a park or community clean up
- Complete a tree map for a local park
- Educate others about trees
- Teach others how to care for a tree
- Organize a hands-on event to get kids excited about the forest
- Organize and complete a tree survey
- Organize a park or forest clean up

Entrepreneurship
- Start a tree care business
- Open a greenhouse or tree selling business
- Write a business plan for a landscaping business
- Make and sell products from recycled forest materials

Technology Connection
- Shadow someone in a forest technology career
- Take a soil sample and have it analyzed
- Learn about the equipment used in your field of interest for this project
- Create a local tree identification scavenger hunt

Connecting with a Mentor
- Reach out to local park staff
- Talk to a friend or family member in this field
- IL Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) staff
- City forestry planner

Events
- 4-H show
- Local park events
- IDNR events
- National Park events
- Kids in the Park

Careers for People Interested in Forestry

Conservation Scientist
Agricultural and Food Scientist
Naturalist
Interpreter
Environmental Educator
Forest Firefighter

Forest and Conservation Worker or Technician
Arborist or Tree Nursery Owner
Natural Resources Policy Representative

Start a Conversation

Did you know the leaf sizes on a single tree differ depending on their location? Why would a "shade leaf" located down low be bigger than a leaf at the top of the tree?

Did you know the "drip line" of a tree is referred to as the widest spread of the branches that reach out from the trunk. Now understand the tree roots underneath the ground reach well beyond this drip-line. Why?

Want to learn more?
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4-H.extension.illinois.edu

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