



Tree Observation

Activity Description:

There are so many trees that look alike but are actually different if you look close enough. This activity will help you learn about the different trees that live around you. The goal of this activity is to observe the variety of trees in your surrounding environment and record your observations through photography and drawing. Enjoy your time outside and remember, these are your neighbors so get to know them!

Materials:

- This activity printout
 - Pencil
 - Notebook
 - Camera
 - Optional: colored pencils/markers
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Trees are...

Trees are defined as perennial (can live for multiple years) plants that have a trunk and branches, typically growing to a considerable height.

Trees are identifiable by looking at the patterns and color of the bark, the shape of their leaves, their seed pods and flowers, the shape of their trunk, the shape of their branches and canopy, their height, and more. For example, pine trees grow tall, with long pointed needles. Oak trees are shorter with crooked trunks and flat lobed leaves.

Directions:

1. **Find a tree and spend some time drawing a closeup perspective of its bark.** Make sure your drawing shows enough detail to help someone match your drawing to your tree.

2. **Find a leaf of your tree.** You might find that your tree's leaf has 3-5 leaves attached. If so, that's okay—these are called leaflets! If the tree's leaves are too high, see if you can find any fallen leaves on the ground. Please **draw your leaf**.
3. Now **take a picture of the tree bark and leaf that you found**. Make sure enough detail is visible to help someone match your picture to your tree.
4. **Write down any thoughts or observations** about the tree's bark and leaves. For example, "The bark has dark brown and reddish brown puzzle-shaped pieces that flake off."
5. **Repeat this process at least three times with three different trees**, but you are encouraged to keep going!
6. **Share your learning with Seeds of Stewardship**. Send us your photos and drawings, and tell us about what you observed:
 - Post your photos to Instagram and tag [@aztsos](#)
 - Or email your photos to
 - julie@aztrail.org for Northern AZ
 - treven@aztrail.org for Southern AZ

Did you discover anything new about a tree you hadn't noticed before?