

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS:

TREES AND OTHER PLANTS

IN 100 ACRES

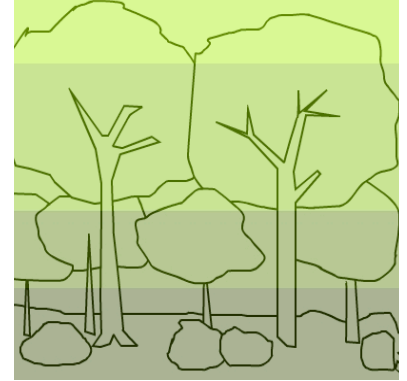
100 THE VIRGINIA B. FAIRBANKS
ART & NATURE PARK
ACRES
IMA

Looking at Layers

Forests are typically divided into four different vertical layers. Moving from the ground upwards, they are the forest floor, the understory, the canopy, and the emergent layer. The light levels and temperatures might differ from one layer to the next, and you can find different plants and animals that are specially adapted to life in each layer.

See if you can detect any layers in the Art & Nature Park forest. Do you notice different kinds of plants or animals? What other differences do you see or feel?

As you explore the Park, how do the layers change from one area to another?

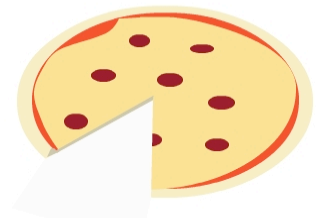


Diagramming Your Dinner

Think about what you ate for dinner last night. Did you eat any plants? Are you *sure*? List out last night's menu here:

Think about and discuss some of the ways that plants played a role in the food on your table. Here are some suggestions to help you out:

- If you had pizza, flour (made from different types of **grains or grasses**) formed the crust, tomato sauce (made from tomatoes—a **vegetable**—and **herbs and spices**—also plants) covered the crust, and cheese (made from milk, which comes from a cow, which eats **grass**) was on the top.
- Chicken nuggets are made from a chicken, which is usually fed a mixture of **corn and other grains** (all plant products). Any food made with eggs can be traced back to plants, too, since the chickens that lay the eggs eat plants.
- Even soda can be traced back to plants! The sugar used to make soda comes from cane sugar (a sturdy **grassy plant**) or corn syrup, which is made from **corn by-products**. Some of the flavors and colors used in sodas also come from plants.



Can you think of other ways in which you can trace your food back to plants?

Touch the Trunks

The stem of a tree is called a trunk. The trunk provides the tree with support for the branches and connects the roots to the rest of the tree, enabling the transport of water and nutrients throughout the plant. On the outside of the trunk is a layer called the bark. Bark acts as insulation from cold weather and fire, and protection from pests such as insects.

The bark of different trees varies widely. Not only does it *look* different, but it also *feels* very different. How would you describe the way the barks of the different types of trees listed below feel? (If you see these trees while you're exploring, go ahead and touch them!) Connect the name of the tree with the photo of its bark and some descriptive words.

1. Buckeye: grey, scaly, pebbly

2. Hackberry: light brown, knobby, warty

3. Sycamore: patchy, peeling, tan, green, white

4. Cottonwood: grey, thick, vertically furrowed

5. Honey locust : smooth, light, thorn-covered

6. Staghorn Sumac: fuzzy, antler-shaped

A B C D E F

Specialized Seeds

Many plants rely on their seeds to produce new plants. Plants can't move from place to place, but many of them have seeds that travel. Take a look at some of these special seeds and see if you can figure out how they might spread.



How do we use seeds on a daily basis? Do you see any animals using seeds? How?

Answers to the bark matching game: 1. C, 2.A, 3. F, 4. B, 5. D, 6. E