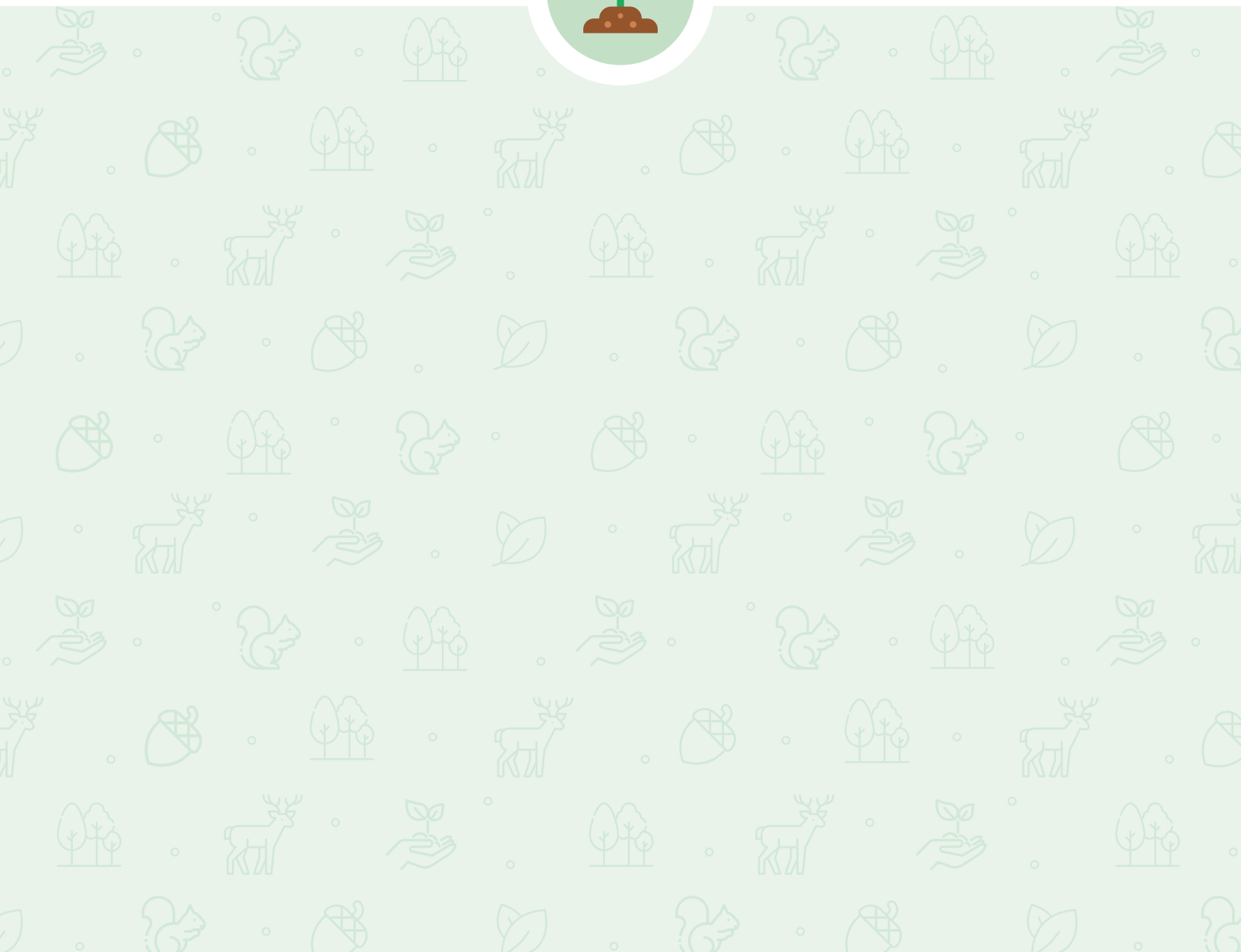
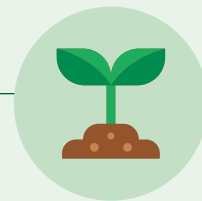


# Tree Stewardship





# Tree Stewardship

## Introduction

A survey commissioned by the Arbor Day Foundation found that 94% of Americans say trees are good for the planet, yet most people don't spend a lot of time focused on trees. Involving kids in environmental advocacy and caring for trees builds their confidence and fosters a sense of attachment, connection, and responsibility—especially as they spend time getting to know the trees around them.

Tree Stewardship reminds kids that protecting trees protects all these benefits and more: oxygen to breathe, cleaner air, carbon dioxide absorption, animal habitats, delicious foods, shade, and improved physical and mental health for humans. The topic gets them thinking about how and why we all need to take care of trees and treat them like celebrities, how we can educate others about tree benefits, and ways they can protect and save trees.

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## Questions to guide explorations and experiments

 How and why are trees important to us and our communities?


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 What effects do trees have on people?


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 How can people help trees?

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 Where are trees most needed and why?

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 How can we inspire others to appreciate and enjoy trees?

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### Helpful “tree-sources” for this topic



#### **People of Forestry Activity Book from Texas A&M Forest Service**

Learn all about the jobs that help keep our forests healthy every day.

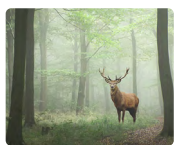
[texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/arborday/People\\_Of\\_Forestry\\_Activity\\_Book\\_Texas\\_web.pdf](https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/arborday/People_Of_Forestry_Activity_Book_Texas_web.pdf)



#### **Find Your Path: Field Forester from Oregon Forest Resources Institute**

Shows a typical day in the life of a field forester

[learnforests.org/all-resources/find-your-path-field-forester](https://learnforests.org/all-resources/find-your-path-field-forester)



#### **Forests are Big Ecosystems from Earth Rangers Homeroom**

Listen to an interview with a forestry expert to discover how forests are being managed to provide both resources for consumers and lasting benefits to the environment.

[homeroom.earthrangers.com/podcast-listen-and-learn/forests-are-big-ecosystems](https://homeroom.earthrangers.com/podcast-listen-and-learn/forests-are-big-ecosystems)

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### Children's Books

#### FICTION

- *Apple and Magnolia* by Laura Gehl (ages 4-8)
- *Bear Helps the Forest* by Karen Lynn Williams (ages 4-8)
- *The City Tree* by Shira Boss (ages 5-9)
- *Happy Birthday, Tree! A Tu B'Shevat Story* by Madelyn Rosenberg (ages 4-8)
- *Hello, Tree* by Ana Crespo (ages 4-8)
- *Kate, Who Tamed the Wind* by Liz Garton Scanlon (ages 4-8)
- *My Tree* by Hope Lim (ages 4-8)
- *Nell Plants a Tree* by Anne Wynter (ages 6-9)
- *Saving Delicia* by Laura Gehl and Patricia Metola (ages 4-8)
- *The Shade Tree* by Suzy Lee (ages 4-9)
- *The Strange Wonders of Roots* by Evan Griffith (ages 8-12)
- *This Is the Tree We Planted* by Kate McMullan (ages 3-6)
- *This Very Tree: A Story of 9/11, Resilience, and Regrowth* by Sean Rubin (ages 6-9)
- *The Tree and Me (Bea Garcia series)* by Deborah Zemke (ages 6-9)



## Tree Stewardship

### FICTION (CONT.)

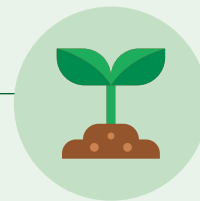
- *The Tree and the River*  
by Aaron Becker (ages 4-7)
- *The Tree of Hope: The Miraculous Rescue of Puerto Rico's Beloved Banyan*  
by Ana Orenstein-Cardona (ages 7-10)
- *Trees Make Perfect Pets*  
by Paul Czajak (ages 4-8)
- *Trillions of Trees: A Counting and Planting Book* by Kurt Cyrus (ages 3-6)
- *Under the Baobab Tree*  
by Julie Stiegemeier (ages 4-8)
- *Zonia's Rain Forest*  
by Juana Martinez-Neal (ages 4-8)

### POETRY

- *Maybe You Might* by Imogen Foxell (ages 4-8)

### NONFICTION

- *Be a Friend to Trees*  
by Patricia Lauber (ages 4-8)
- *Cool Green: Amazing, Remarkable Trees*  
by Lulu Delacre (ages 7-10)
- *Deep Roots: How Trees Sustain Our Planet*  
by Nikki Tate (ages 8-12)
- *A Forest in the City*  
by Andrea Curtis (ages 8-12)
- *Forest Fighter: The Story of Chico Mendes*  
by Anita Ganeri (ages 7-11)
- *If a Tree Falls: The Global Impact of Deforestation* by Nikki Tate (ages 8-12)
- *Johnny Appleseed*  
by Steven Kellogg (ages 4-8)
- *The Leaf Detective: How Margaret Lowman Uncovered Secrets in the Rainforest*  
by Heather Lang (ages 7-10)
- *Let's Save Our Planet: Forests*  
by Jess French (ages 8-10)
- *Luna & Me: The True Story of a Girl Who Lived in a Tree to Save a Forest*  
by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw (age 5-9)
- *The Magic of Forests: A Fascinating Guide to Forests Around the World*  
by Vicky Woodgate (ages 6-10)
- *One Million Trees: A True Story*  
by Kristen Balouch (ages 8-12)
- *Planting Peace: The Story of Wangari Maathai* by Gwendolyn Hooks (ages 8-12)
- *Stand as Tall as the Trees: How an Amazonian Community Protected the Rain Forest* by Patricia Gualinga and Laura Resau (ages 6-9)
- *A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How One Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animal*  
by Carmen Oliver (ages 6-9)



# Tree Inventory

## Introduction

It may seem like a complex challenge for kids, but young people throughout history have helped to care for and protect the environment and successfully helped their communities by taking action. As kids today learn to navigate the challenges our planet faces, engaging them in environmental **stewardship** nurtures the critical thinking and problem-solving skills they need and helps equip them with the tools to be a part of creating a healthier, more sustainable future.

When they take an inventory of neighborhood trees, Tree Trekkers will get to know their community, learn about stewardship, and the important role people play in taking care of trees, forests, and the land around us. They'll also look at what foresters and others do to care for trees and help protect forests and wildlife, and consider and plan what they can do themselves.

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## Supplies

- Copies of Tree Inventory handout (page 69)
- Tree Trekker Journals (or notebooks)
- Writing and drawing tools



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## Get kids thinking

Share the definition of **stewardship** with kids and get them to think about their own careful and responsible management of something that has been entrusted to their care. It might be caring for a garden or pet, keeping their bicycle in good condition, or organizing and maintaining the books in their home library. Have kids share how they practice stewardship, giving examples of the actions they take—watering a garden, cleaning up after a pet, etc.



## Tree Inventory

**Ask kids:** What other things in our community could you help take care of? What role can you play in taking care of trees? Who else takes care of trees and forests?

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### Let's get started!

**Start with a book!** Share titles that give kids more ideas about what tree stewardship could look like, such as *The City Tree* by Shira Boss, *Happy Birthday, Tree! A Tu B'Shevat Story* by Madelyn Rosenberg, or *Nell Plants a Tree* by Anne Wynter. Also share “Fabulous Forest Folk” in *The Magic of Forests* by Vicky Woodgate to learn about people who have dedicated themselves to the care of forests. Talk about ways the characters in the stories practice stewardship.

**Ask kids and discuss:** Why do these characters take responsibility for trees? Who takes care of trees in your neighborhood? Do you have responsibility to care for the trees around you?

A forest is able to be healthy and thrive when a forester—someone whose job it is to plan, manage, and take care of forests as they grow—knows how many trees there are in the forest, what kind of trees there are, and how they are growing. Talk with kids about how knowledge of the trees around them is an important first step toward being a good steward of trees.



Making a list or doing an inventory of neighborhood trees brings attention to trees, identifies trees that might need help, and spots locations where new trees could be planted. Together, decide on a location to explore, provide copies of the Tree Inventory handout on page 69, and head outside so kids can count and observe trees. (Younger kids should tally the number of trees/spaces for trees that they see in their Tree Trekker Journal instead of completing the Tree Inventory or draw a map of the location that shows all the trees/spaces they see.)

After the inventory, prompt Tree Trekkers to discuss their observations: Did everyone notice the same things or were there differences in their inventories? Did trees seem healthy or did some have problems? What could be done to make sure trees stay healthy or to help trees in need? Is there room for more trees in this area? What benefits could more trees bring? What steps could they take to support the trees in this area?





## Tree Inventory

In their Tree Trekker Journal, have kids reflect on their observations and what they've learned about stewardship. Have them write three ways they could be a steward of trees, why they think tree stewardship is important, and how they will put their stewardship into action. Ask kids to share their ideas! Some examples might include:

- Picking up trash and disposing of it properly
- Leaving natural objects (like pinecones or flowers) in nature for others to enjoy
- Walking on sidewalks or trails instead of compacting soil around tree roots
- Caring for trees by not damaging the bark or leaves
- Not disturbing birds or other wildlife
- Planting new trees

Compile ideas along with data Tree Trekkers gathered in their inventories. Have them use the information to create a flyer about being a good steward to the trees in this neighborhood and share it with community members, along with an invitation to join kids in planting trees, pulling up harmful **invasive species** such as kudzu or English ivy, or picking up trash.

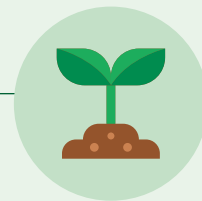


# Tree Inventory for

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location Type (street, park, common area, house, wooded area)	Description (mature tree, full canopy, sapling, dead tree, space for new tree)	Identification (type of tree or species of tree if known)	Problems (yellowing leaves, invasive vines, broken branches, disease or insect damage)	Benefits (shade, wind break, community gathering place, animal habitat)





# Talking Up Trees

## Introduction

Trees often get taken for granted, but we'd be in trouble without them there to improve our air, give us food, and slow the impact of climate change. Without trees, life on Earth would be much harder, if not impossible!

Trees have played important roles throughout history, inspiring art, architecture, literature, and serving as the main fuel and building material of every society until the middle of the 19th century. Trees are also important cultural and religious symbols: the olive branch has symbolized peace since ancient Greece.

Tree Trekkers can learn more about the many benefits of trees, then create something—like a poster, handout, coloring sheet, video, slideshow, song, game, skit, or signs—to educate others, raise awareness about how trees help us all, and issue a call to action to help trees.

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## Supplies

- Books about trees
- Writing and drawing materials
- Materials to make their chosen project
- Computer and printer (optional)
- Internet access to research kid-friendly sites (optional)
- Tools to make a video or digital slideshow (optional)

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## Get Kids Thinking

Take a moment to share with kids an encounter that you've had with a tree that gave you a feeling of awe. Talk about what was special to you about this particular tree and why you remember it.

**Ask kids:** How much do they think about or notice trees? How much do they think that other people think about or notice trees? We've never known life without trees. Is that a reason to assume trees will always be there? Talk with kids about what the world would be like if we didn't have trees. What would we do?



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### Let's Get Started!

**Start with a book** such as *Be a Friend to Trees* by Patricia Lauber, *The Magic and Mystery of Trees* by Jen Green, or other titles that share the many benefits of trees. Ask kids why they think people often overlook trees despite the vital role they play in maintaining life on Earth. What information or ideas do kids think they should share to help change how people see trees and make sure we take care of them?

**Step 1:** Get kids to research the benefits of trees in one or more of the below categories, then brainstorm ways they can use the information to educate others about trees. Encourage them to take notes about what they learn.

- **Social benefits:** Trees provide inviting spaces to gather, play, and connect, reduce stress levels, and influence community health
- **Cultural benefits:** Trees contribute to heritage and identity, offer beauty, provide outdoor recreation, and inspire art, literature, and music
- **Environmental benefits:** Trees support wildlife and biodiversity, prevent soil erosion, improve air quality, reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and lessen effects of urban heat islands
- **Economic benefits:** Trees provide food, fuel, and fiber, wood, sap, rubber, or resins for people to make things

Whichever category they choose, Tree Trekkers should also think about specific ways trees benefit them and their family at home and in their community. For example, there may be economic benefits of lower energy bills thanks to shade trees near their home.

**Step 2:** Have kids decide what they want to do to teach others about the importance of trees. They could all work on the same project, work in groups, or each do their own thing. They could teach about every benefit category, or each group could focus on one specific type of tree benefit. As kids consider ideas, share books that offer examples of kids supporting trees in their community, such as *A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How One Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animal* by Carmen Oliver, *Kate, Who Tamed the Wind* by Liz Garton Scanlon, or *The Tree and Me* by Deborah Zemke.

Some Tree Trekkers may want to research how to protect trees from threats like deforestation or climate change. Or they might want to investigate the impact of construction projects to the trees in their community, learn how to plant new trees or save existing ones from invasive plants, or discover ways they can to support policies and programs that protect forests and trees.



**Step 4:** Share the knowledge and tree love! Have Tree Trekkers share their projects with each other and then with others. Help them find audiences for their projects, whether it's by displaying posters around a school or library or sharing their video online.



You can also **Branch Out!** to a local park and hold a tree appreciation event where kids get to present their work to families and the community. By teaching others about how trees are essential to our survival, kids can make a difference in the way people think about and care for the trees around them and around the world.