



Let's Thank the Trees this Week!

A learning experience and walk for Early Learners and their families.

Suggested hike: A neighborhood walk or hunt for the “Octopus Tree” on the Shawsheen Reservation (link at bottom).

This Wednesday is **Earth Day**, a day to think about keeping our planet healthy for all the things that live here, like us! Have you ever wondered what the Earth’s helpers are? Well, you could be one! But did you know that trees are Earth helpers, too? So first let’s talk about trees. They give us so many things. Can you think of anything that trees give us?

Yes! Fruits-- like apples, pears, peaches, avocados for guacamole...mmm...so many delicious fruits. But did you also know that trees help you breathe? They make oxygen which is a very important part of the air you breathe.

Here's a song all about trees:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7dKRBZVLvI>

Trees are important, and sometimes people form special feelings for them. In our country called America, live **the tallest trees**. They are called redwoods, and are so big around the middle that some have even been carved into tunnels for people to drive their cars right through! People come from all over the world to feel what it's like to be with these majestic trees. Here are some pictures:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsbdev3_058751.pdf

But trees come in all sizes, and there are also **the smallest trees**, called bonsai, which people keep inside their houses in a country far away called Japan. A family may pass one (old but tiny) tree down through several generations, from grandparent, to parent, to grandchild, as a living "heirloom". An heirloom is something that can make people feel connected through time. If you are interested in learning more about the bonsai tradition, click here: <https://kids.kiddle.co/Bonsai>

You might have a tree that makes you happy, like one you climb or swing from. Or one you dream about building a treehouse in someday.

Here's a story you can watch about a boy named Arnold and his secret tree.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3t3icKhq4M>

So what else is interesting about trees? Well, some trees wear their leaves all winter, like a coat, and some don't. Today we'll talk and think about those that drop their leaves-- the **deciduous** trees.

Did you know that tree leaves eat sunlight to grow? Crazy, right? So when deciduous trees drop their leaves to the ground in the fall, they stop growing, and sleep. That is called becoming "**dormant**". But also in the fall that tree sends its sugary sap into its roots underground where it waits until the warm sun of late winter and early spring tell the tree to "Wake Up!!". Now the sap will start to rise up the trunk, and the sugar in it will help the tree buds swell and grow bigger (just like food gives people energy to play and work!), getting ready to become brand new baby leaves. That's what is happening inside the secret lives of trees right now. And once the leaves open--you guessed it! The tree can use the sun's energy again to grow all summer long. Right into fall, when the cycle will begin again. Here is a video link on photosynthesis (parents: it contains a very brief carnivore moment):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPBMG5EYydo>

Or this whimsical document that older siblings might enjoy reading to younger children:

<https://www.superteacherworksheets.com/reading-comp/4th-p>

[photosynthesis_WMTFZ.pdf](#) There is also a worksheet for the older children, if they like.

Did you know that **you** can be an Earth helper, like the trees? The first step to helping the planet is to love it. People take care of what they love, like you're parents will always take care of you, because they love you, no matter what! So to be an Earth helper, go for a walk in the woods this week, or even around your neighborhood, and just notice the trees. Are they wearing a winter coat of needles (leaves)? Or do they have buds at the ends of bare branches? Can you imagine the secret sap rising up inside the trunk to feed the buds? What does bark feel like? Be a tree hugger, and find out!!

This week's suggested hike: The Octopus Tree hunt: No, it's not a real octopus, silly. The roots of this tree have been exposed for many years by the Shawsheen river. But how fun to see the roots that help feed the tree! Please enjoy your play inside the roots very gently so future generations may also discover it. Below is the link to help you follow the trail. Begin at 'horn bridge', and when you come to the end of the field follow the return trail along the river's edge. The link includes a trail map and a video view of your goal!

[.http://avisandover.org/shawsheenriver.html](http://avisandover.org/shawsheenriver.html)

Nature Observation for this week:

Parents: Children may be stressed by all they are hearing about the Covid-19 virus, without the ability to understand our adult words and world. Here is an early childhood version of a meditation that they may enjoy for relaxation, based on a treehouse:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWOHcGF1Tmc>

For LLL Preschool, AVIS, and especially, Carter and Lincoln Platt by Nana, AKA Cheryl Platt McKeough