

Meet the Trees of the Forest

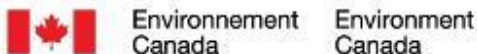


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Activity Name: Meeting the Forest**Ages: 6-14****Activity Energy: Medium****Length of time: 45 minutes****Number of Participants: 10 - 30**

Concept: This hands-on activity teaches common tree identification using the senses of touch and smell.

Materials Required: A blindfold for every other person. Recommend referencing the lesson titled 'Common Trees of the Southern Gulf Islands' for information about tree identification.

Introduction: Tree identification is a useful skill. Different tree species provide different types of habitat for different animals, and have different uses (construction, art, furniture, fuel, horticulture, and ecosystem restoration). Different trees grow in different environments and they can be used to tell us about the conditions year round at a site (is it swampy in the winter, etc.). This lesson provides a memorable hands-on experience to help people learn to identify local tree species. A blindfold is used to encourage the use of touch and smell.

Methods: Choose a location with a number of different tree species present, which is reasonably level ground and can be walked by someone with a blindfold with guidance. Bring everyone into a circle and provide a brief introduction to the tree species around the learning site (refer to the lesson 'Common Trees of the Southern Gulf Islands'). Assign students into partners. One of each partner puts on a blindfold and turns in a circle two times. The non-blindfolded partner guides their partner into the forest to a tree of their choice and introduces the tree to their blindfolded partner (without telling them what species it is). The blindfolded partner has three minutes to feel the tree, smell the tree, and name the tree. The non-blindfolded partner then guides their partner back to the circle. Once back in the circle the blindfolded partner spins in a circle again two times before removing the blindfold. They then have to try and find their specific tree. After they have found their tree the partners switch and repeat the exercise.

Tips for Teachers:

- It is recommended you find a learning place with multiple tree species present, and without too many tripping hazards. It is up to the non-blindfolded partner to help their partner over the terrain without them falling.
- While the students are feeling their trees, it is a very good photo opportunity!
- After the activity, take the time to reiterate the identification features and the importance of trees.