Tree Patch

For Juniors

Trees are an important part of our environment. Trees remove CO2 from the air and help fight global warming. They provide shade, food, homes for animals and the air that we breathe! The activities in this patch program are designed to help you feel connected to your community and to have an appreciation for trees. Additionally, by completing the requirements for this patch you will discover practical life skills, such as interviewing and information gathering. You will connect to your troop and others by sharing what you have learned and practicing your communication skills.

To earn this patch, Junior Girl Scouts must complete six activities.

1. Tree Identification

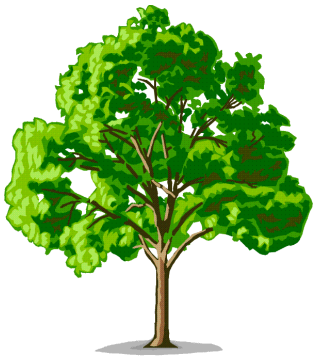
Discover how to use resources efficiently as you learn how to identify trees using a dichotomous key. Identify at least 15 trees in your neighborhood. (See resources)

2. Tree Pruning

Talk to a landscaper, gardener, or horticulturist about pruning trees. Discover the proper way to prune a tree so that the tree remains healthy. Select a tree in your backyard to prune. Be sure to ask permission before you prune the trees. Then, using the skills you have learned, prune the tree.

3. Leaf Identification

Choose any leaf and look at it carefully. Create a diagram of the leaf and its parts by using a book and your own knowledge to help you. Practice your communication skills as you share your work with your troop and ask them to provide feedback.



4. Leaf Collection

Trees have many different types of leaves and can be identified by them. The leaves provide the tree with the essentials of life, such as carbon dioxide and water. Just as you and I have tongues and mouths to absorb food and water, the tree has leaves for the same purpose. For this activity, you will collect and display different types of leaves. (See resources)

5. Leaf Prints
Discover your creativity and make leaf prints. Leaf prints are a fun way to decorate bags, clothing, or anything else. (See resources)

6. Your Tree
Find a tree in your yard or neighborhood that you really like. Choose on of its leaves and draw or write about it.

Then

A. Observe the tree for at least two seasons. What happens to the tree as the seasons change? During what season do you like your tree the best? Is there any moss or weeds around your tree?

Or

B. Observe the animals that live around, in and on your tree. Do they have any holes or nests there? Do animals hibernate in your tree?

Share your observations with your troop.

7. Interview
Practice important life skills and interview a forester, horticulturist or arborist. Find out what their job entails and what they know about trees. Find out what their job entails and how it relates to trees. Be sure to ask them about proper tree care and the different types of trees in your area. What is the most common tree and why?

8. Tree inventory
Complete an inventory of the trees in your yard or neighborhood. Is there an excess of one type of tree? Did you find any strange or unusual trees? Create a small map of your neighborhood and label the trees on the map. Get each member of your whole troop to complete a small area and then combine the maps into one big map.

9. Plant
Take action and plant a tree that will thrive in your area. Remember to water and take care of it.

*The Tree Patch is based on a Gold Award Project created by Rachel Clausen, 1997

Resources

Dichotomous Key

A dichotomous key is a method for determining the identity of something (like the name of a butterfly, a plant, or a rock) by going through a series of choices that leads the user to the correct name of the item. Dichotomous means "divided in two parts".

At each step of the process of using the key, the user is given two choices; each alternative leads to another question until the item is identified. (It's like playing 20 questions.)

For example, a question in a dichotomous key for trees might be something like, "Are the leaves flat or needle-like?" If the answer was "needle-like," then the next question might be something like, "Are the needles in a bunch or are they spread along the branch?" Eventually, when enough questions have been answered, the identity of the tree is revealed

You can Google “dichotomous key tree” and find many examples on the web or visit your local library to borrow tree identification books.

Leaf Collection:

You will need:

- Several pieces of construction paper
- Something to put your leaves in
- A thin marker
- Tape
- A hole puncher
- Colored string
- A leaf identification book (optional)

1. Connect with your neighborhood as you take a walk and collect as many different leaves as you can find.
2. Tape the leaves onto the construction paper. There should be 2 or 3 per page.
3. Label them neatly using your knowledge or a leaf identification book.
4. Keeping the pages together, punch 3 holes into the paper.
5. Pass the string through the holes and tie a bow or knot.

Now your collection is complete. Connect with your troop and share your collection with them.

Leaf Prints:

You will need:

- A bag, a clean shirt or a piece of paper to put the leaf print on
- A rolling pin or artist's roller
- Assorted acrylic paints
- Newspaper
- A smock
- Pie plates

1. Lay the newspaper on a flat surface.
2. Lay the bag, shirt, piece of paper, etc. on the newspaper.
3. Place a small amount of paint onto a pie plate. Use a different color for each plate,
4. Take one leaf and gently press it into the paint.
5. Place it onto the bag, shirt, paper, etc. and gently roll over it with the rolling pin or artist's roller.
6. Carefully lift the leaf off and throw it away.*
7. Continue making prints until the whole bag, shirt, paper, etc. is covered.

Do Not Reuse Leaves Unless You Want To Mix Colors!!*

Wear your shirt, hang your picture or carry your books in your bag. Proudly display your work of art!

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