



Tree Exploration

Go into your yard or park and find a tree. Below are many ways you and a child can explore a single tree without even knowing what kind of tree it is.

Soil

- Touch it, is it rough or smooth, add water to it - now how does it feel?
- Dig down a little – what is the color of the soil, does it change as you dig deeper?
- Are there rocks in the soil – what color are they?
- How does the soil smell?
- Are there worms in the soil?

Bark

- Talk about textures, colors
- Put paper on the bark and rub with a crayon
- Does the bark smell like anything?

Leaves or needles

- Touch them
- Look at the colors, look at the veins and surface with a magnifying glass, are there bumps or hairs on them?
- What sound do they make when you crinkle them?
- Crush the leaves or needles – how do they smell?
- Make leaf prints with them using paint
- Float the leaves in water in the sink



Seasons

- Notice the leaf buds in the winter
- Watch the buds break in spring, track the opening of the flowers (they might be small and green but they will be there)
- See the flowers as they turn into seeds or fruit
- Watch the leaves turn color in the fall, talk about what happens when the leaves fall and how they turn back into mulch and soil and fertilize the tree
- When snow falls – measure how much snow has fallen under the tree, look for tracks of animals
- Ask questions about what will happen next....

Insects and Wildlife

- Are there any insects crawling on the bark or on the leaves?
- Are there any butterflies or bees pollinating the tree or visiting it?
- Are there any birds in the tree, any nests? Why would birds put their nest in a tree?
- Can you hear any birds calling from the tree or nearby? What does it sound like they are saying?
- Are there holes in the tree, is there any wildlife that might use holes in a tree?
- Are there any squirrels using the tree? Why would squirrels like trees?
- Hang a homemade bird feeder in the tree, like a pinecone rolled in peanut butter with birdseed stuck to it.

The Whole Tree

- Measure the width or height of the tree using hands, footsteps, or measuring tape
- Describe the shape of the tree
- Count the major stems or branches
- Draw pictures of the tree
- Make up songs about the tree
- Use fallen leaves, twigs, nuts, or pine cones for art collages and projects
- Hug the tree, how does it feel?
- Pretend to be a mighty tree growing from a single small seed
- Lay under the tree and look at the leaves and branches from below
- Water the tree



Questions? Comments? Get in touch!

Contact our Farm to ECE team at wifarmtoece@rootedwi.org. Visit our website at rootedwi.org for more Farm to ECE resources.

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