



## **Morrill Public Library Program:**

*Theme: Parts of a Tree ~ Comparing Trees and People*

*Book: Are Trees Alive? by Debbie S. Miller*

Learn about nature with the Nebraska Forest Service and Morrill Public Library! Watch the following videos featuring the book *Are Trees Alive?* by Debbie Miller read aloud by Jack Hilgert, NFS Conservation Education Assistant. Then complete the activities described, printed instructions for the activities are included below.

**Link to Video 1: Introduction and Story-Read-Aloud:** [https://youtu.be/T46\\_lrOj8Ew](https://youtu.be/T46_lrOj8Ew)

**Link to Video 3: Extending the Story, Instructions:** <https://youtu.be/uhw2B81ppHk>

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### *Activity 1: "To Be A Tree" Family Activity from Project Learning Tree*

By making a tree costume, children will gain awareness of tree structure and functions.

**Materials:** Paper grocery bag, coloring supplies, paper, safety scissors, tissue paper, straws, yarn  
*Feel free to substitute some of these items for others you have at home. Find a PDF of the activity here:* [plt.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PLT\\_Act62\\_To\\_Be\\_a\\_Tree.pdf](http://plt.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PLT_Act62_To_Be_a_Tree.pdf)

#### **Instructions:**

On your next walk, select a tree and ask children to name and identify its component parts (trunk, branch, leaves, bark, roots, etc.). Collect a few leaves and after heading back inside, invite children to make leaf rubbings by placing leaves (vein side up) on white paper and rubbing over them with the sides of paperless crayons. Carefully cut out the leaf rubbings, punch a hole in each, and use yarn to string them together into a crown.

Next, use the pattern below to help children create a paper bag vest. This vest can be worn with the leaf crown above to make a tree costume that models real tree parts.

With a child's torso serving as a tree's trunk and their arms as branches, ask children to add these tree parts to their vests:

*Bark* – glue pieces of bark directly to OR try a bark rubbing on the outside of the vest.

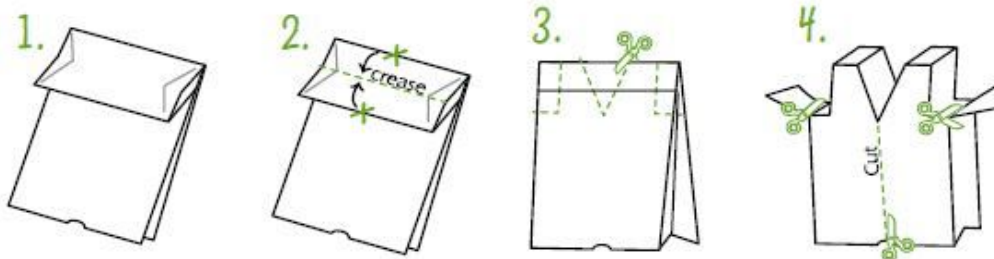
*Roots* – tape long strands of yarn to the bottom of the vest.

*Phloem* – glue stirring straws (smaller diameter) to the inside of the vest.

*Cambium* – attach tissue paper to the inside of the vest.

*Xylem* – tape drinking straws (larger diameter) to the inside of the vest.

*Heartwood* – create a paper chain to wear as a belt.



Ask older children to research phloem, cambium, xylem, and heartwood to better understand the material metaphors used on their tree vests.

Activity 2: Student Matching and Coloring Page

PDF/printable version of the sheet: <https://go.unl.edu/062q>

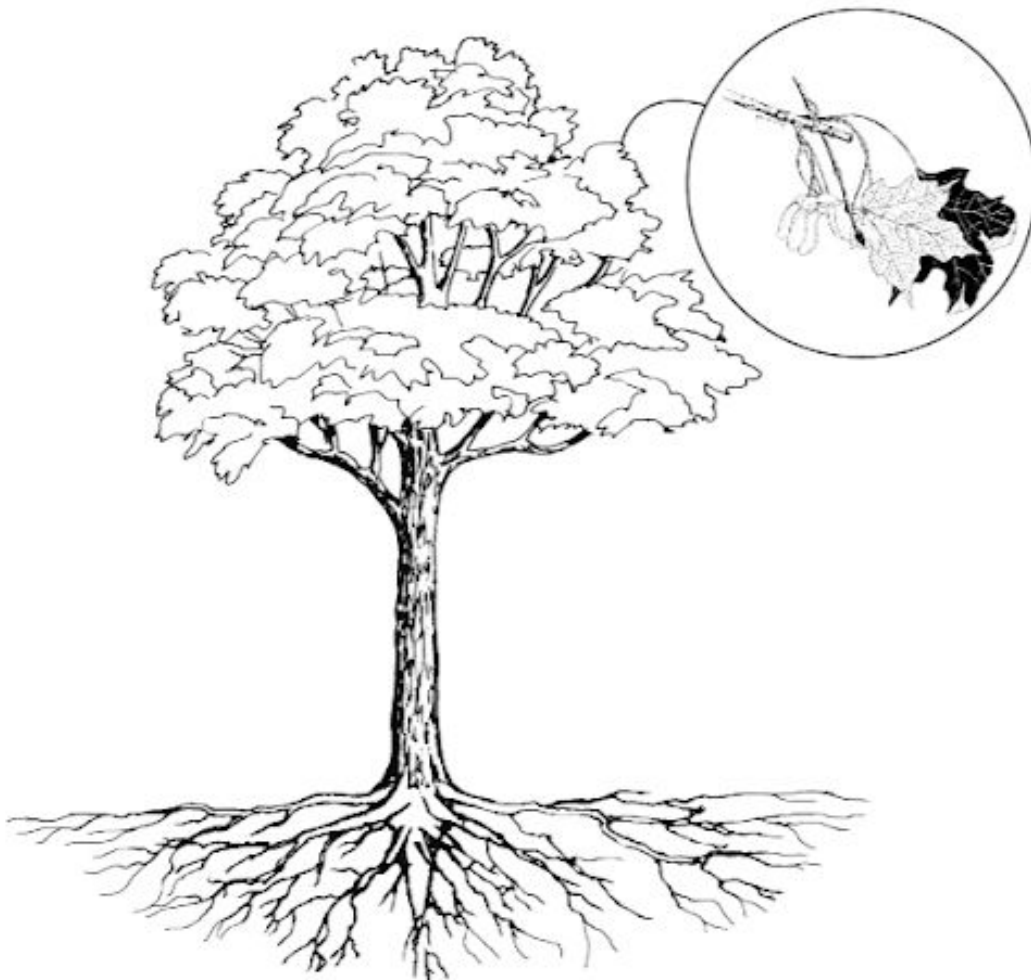
**Instructions:**

Draw a line connecting the parts of the tree to their label at the bottom. Color your sheet to help the tree come to life; *let your imagination run wild!*



**Student Page**

**Living Labels**



**Trunk**

**Branch**

**Fruit  
(Seeds)**

**Leaves**

**Roots**

### Activity 3: Online Self Exploration

Expand and test your knowledge with these self-guided online explorations from University of Illinois Extension, a partner of National Project Learning Tree. Learn about how Trees grow and live through these interactive webpages. *Remember to always have parental/guardian's permission and guidance when going online:*

**Trees Are Terrific** (Kindergarten - 2nd focus): [web.extension.illinois.edu/trees1/](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/trees1/)

**Exploring the Secret Life of Trees** (3rd - 5th focus): [web.extension.illinois.edu/trees2/02.html](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/trees2/02.html)

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#### Why are trees important?

Trees are essential to many ecosystems, from tropical rainforests to even your own backyard. Without trees many species of animals and plants could not survive. They provide essential food, shelter, shade, and more to many species. Trees also help provide oxygen that both humans and animals need to survive. *The Nebraska Forest Service's mission is "To enrich lives of Nebraska's citizens by protecting, restoring and utilizing Nebraska's tree and forest resources."*

#### Where can I learn more about Nebraska trees?

There are numerous print and online resources about North American as well as Nebraska trees and plants. Check out a guidebook from the Morrill Public Library or visit these links to continue your learning. *Remember to always have parental/guardian's permission and guidance when going online:*

**NFS Trees to Plant in Nebraska:** <https://nfs.unl.edu/trees-to-plant>

**UNL Tree & Shrub Identification:** <https://snr.unl.edu/data/trees/identification/index.aspx>

**Nebraska State-wide Arboretum Resources:** <https://plantnebraska.org/plants/>

#### Want to learn more about Nature this summer?

The Nebraska Forest Service is the state coordinating agency for Project Learning Tree and Project WET national environmental education curriculums. Through these excellent curriculums, we have links to engaging resources to continue learning and exploring throughout the summer.

*From Project Learning Tree:*

<https://www.plt.org/activities-for-families/>

Try these easy to follow activities to connect the children in your life to the outdoors and nature. PLT's Nature Activities for Families collection is made specifically for families with children ages 3 – 15. Get ideas on how to create meaningful memories with your family in your backyard, neighborhood park, or even indoors. They are a great resource to keep learning going during the summer, while also having fun with the whole family!

*From Project WET:*

<https://www.projectwet.org/distancelearning>

Project WET wants to ensure that water education continues for people of all ages, resulting in a suite of free and discounted resources that educators, parents and children can use to learn about water while meeting standards in math, language arts, science and even fine arts. Project WET hopes this helps educators and students continue learning and exploring during this pandemic. Check back weekly to view new Project WET resources!

#### Have questions about this or other Nebraska Forest Service education programming?

Feel free to contact us with any questions! Visit our website: <https://nfs.unl.edu/education> or contact Jack Hilgert, Conservation Education Assistant, at [jack.hilgert@unl.edu](mailto:jack.hilgert@unl.edu). Learn more about all we have to offer with conservation and environmental education programming.



Nebraska Forest Service  
102 Forestry Hall | PO Box 830815 | Lincoln, NE 68583-0815  
(402) 472-2944 | [trees@unl.edu](mailto:trees@unl.edu) | [nfs.unl.edu](http://nfs.unl.edu)