

Identification Key to Some Common Riparian Trees

Locate your assigned tree amongst those that are flagged. Start at number 1 on the key. Read both choices, and follow the directions based on your choice. When you reach a name, you have identified the tree! Enter the information on your team's student data card.

1. Tree has leaves – Go to 2, or
Tree has needles – Go to 3

2. Leaves are opposite (straight across from each other) – Go to 6, or
Leaves are alternate (not straight across from each other) – Go to 9

3. Needles are in bunches – Go to 4, or
Needles are in clusters – Go to 5

4. Needles are in bunches of 3 – **Loblolly pine**, or
Needles are in bunches of 5 – **Eastern white pine**

5. Needles are prickly, up to 3/8 inch long, bark tan to reddish brown and shreddy. – **Eastern Red Cedar**, or
Needles are flat, extending only to one side of branch, 2 parallel white lines on underside of needles, small cones present – **Eastern Hemlock**

6. Leaves are compound (divided into parts) – Go to 7, or
Leaves are simple (having only one part) – Go to 8

7. Most leaves have 3 to 5 leaflets – **Boxelder**, or
Most leaves have 7 to 9 leaflets – **White Ash**

8. Most leaves have finely toothed edges and 3 to 5 main lobes – **Red Maple**, or
Leaves are oval, with smooth edges – **Flowering Dogwood**

9. Leaves are compound (divided into parts) – Go to 10, or
Leaves are simple (having only one part) – Go to 11

10. Leaflets are rounded leaflets; there may be “pods” on the tree – **Black locust**, or
Leaflets are pointed, with 5 to 9 leaflets; nuts are smaller than a golf ball – a **Hickory** species

11. Leaves are heart shaped, flattened seed pods may be present – **Red Bud**, or
Leaves are not heart shaped – Go to 12

12. Leaves are somewhat triangular with toothed edges; bark is ragged and peeling – **River Birch**,
or
Leaves are some shape other than triangular – Go to 13
13. Leaves are oval shaped with toothed edges – Go to 14
Leaves are oval shaped with smooth edges (spines maybe present) – Go to 16
14. Leave are oval and double toothed, bark is gray, smooth and fluted (muscle-like), small, multi-
stemmed – **American hornbeam**, or
Leaves are oval with single toothed – Go to 15
15. Leave are 2 to 5 inches long, oval with finely toothed edges. Young bark smooth with short
horizontal white lines, older bark charcoal gray with platy curling out edges – **Black Cherry**
Leaves oval less than 3 times as long as wide, bark smooth and gray, pointy brown buds up to
1 inch long – **American Beech**
16. Leaves are evergreen, thick, shiny, with sharp spines – **American holly**, or
Leaves are not evergreen or spiny – Go to 17
17. Leaves with 7 to 9 lobes, deep sinuses, bark light gray to whitish – **White Oak**, or
Leaves have less than 7 lobes, Go to 18
18. Leaves are star-shaped with 5 to 7 lobes very finely toothed. Bark on twigs has corky ridges.
Seeds in a spiky ball – **Sweetgum**, or
Leaves have 3 to 5 main points and ragged edges; bark is a mixture of brown, gray, and white
near the top, with some peeling areas – **Sycamore**