



Tree, Sweet Tree

Trees are home to many different animals, from insects and spiders to birds and squirrels. Trees also provide food and shelter for many animals.

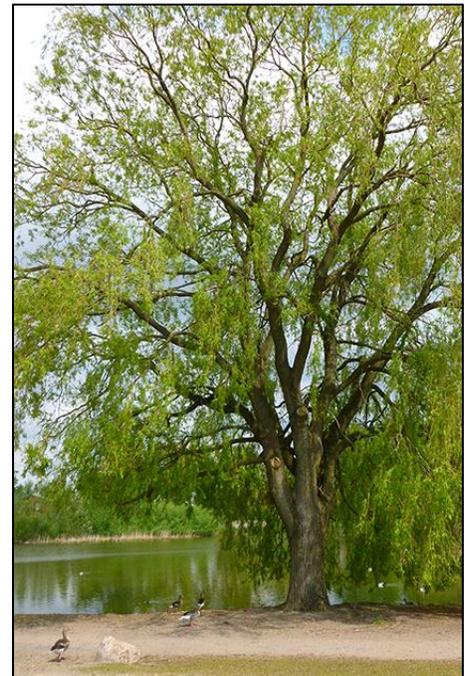
In this activity, your kids will explore trees and the animals that live in or visit them.

Materials

- magnifying lenses (optional)
- journal (optional)
- camera (optional)

Procedure

1. Explore an area with trees, such as your backyard, a neighborhood park or state park. Find the trees that are free of hazards (no sharp objects or poisonous plants).
2. Tell your child you will be visiting a tree(s) to find out what animals live there. Ask what animal s/he thinks live in different places of a tree, such as the roots, bark, branches and crown.
3. Take your child to the place you have previously selected and give him time to explore. Remind him to "look up, look down and all around." Encourage him to use the magnifying lens, if available.
4. Older children might want to take a journal with them and record how the animals use the tree.
5. If your child does not see any animals, help her find signs of animal presence, such as chewed leaves, holes in the bark, spider webs, etc. She can also look on the ground around the tree for signs of animal activity on fallen leaves, branches, flowers and cones.



6. If s/he wishes, encourage your child to take pictures of the animals and signs of animals s/he finds.

7. Back at home, your child can draw pictures of the tree and the animals found on and around it. If s/he kept a journal, s/he can draw in it and also print and glue the pictures s/he has taken.

Extension

Visit the tree several times during the year to see which animals are using it.

Tip: The fall is the best time to see nests, when deciduous trees are leafless.

Activity adapted from: "Growing Up Wild" and "Project Learning Tree"