

Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's safe, fun, and educational!

Tree Cookies

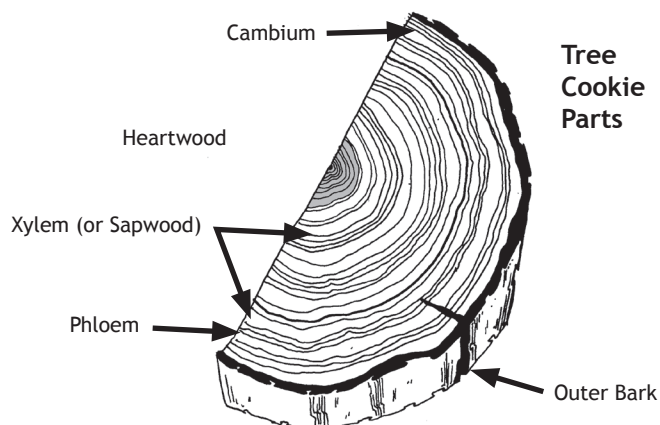
One way to learn about tree growth is to look at annual rings. Tree rings show patterns of change in a tree's life as well as changes in the area where it grows. In this activity, you can trace environmental and historical changes using a cross section of a tree, or "tree cookie."

Have you ever counted tree rings? Every growth season, a tree adds a new layer of wood to its trunk and limbs. This means you can determine the age of a tree by counting its layers, or rings. Have children learn more about a tree's life by examining a tree cookie and asking:

- How old was this part of the tree when the tree cookie was cut?
- Can you see different markings? Evidence of scars or narrow, misshapen rings?
- What might have happened to the tree to cause these different markings?

Use a hand lens to get a closer look at the tree cookie's texture. Can you see any holes or channels that might allow water and nutrients to travel up the tree? Finally, ask children to draw a tree cookie the same age as themselves. What can they do to show when important events in their lives took place?

For a children's book that describes the various parts of trees and their functions, check out *Outside and Inside Trees* by Sandra Markel, published by Simon and Schuster, 1993, ISBN: 0027623130.



Tree
Cookie
Parts

Do this word search puzzle to discover some components of trees and forest cycles. Look below for the answers.

H	M	Z	E	S	B	M	I	L	T	F
G	E	C	F	D	T	C	A	K	L	B
E	T	A	M	I	L	C	N	X	A	I
S	H	M	R	G	R	U	E	R	U	S
A	G	B	P	T	R	E	K	S	N	G
E	U	I	H	T	W	O	R	G	N	N
S	O	U	P	H	L	O	E	M	A	I
I	R	M	S	A	P	W	O	O	D	R
D	D	X	Y	L	E	M	Z	D	W	R

Make Learning Fun!

Encourage your child's school to incorporate learning outdoors.

For more activity ideas and materials:

- Attend a PLT workshop, www.plt.org/state-network/
- Visit shop.plt.org



Project Learning Tree®
(PLT) is an initiative
of the Sustainable
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