

Schoolyard Fall Leaves Lesson

Prep: Take students outside and ask each student to collect 5 fall leaves that are all different. Students could also bring leaves from home if they want to learn about trees in their neighborhood.

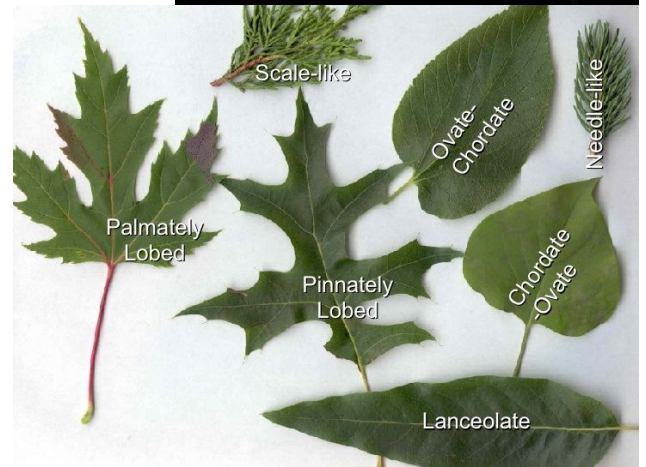
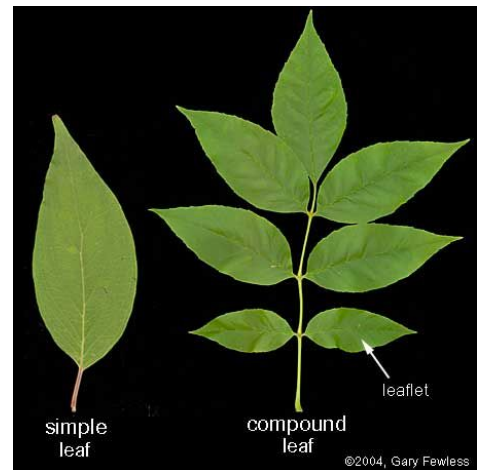
Note: This lesson can be conducted inside or outside. Or try the minds on outside, then go in for the activity.

Minds on:

1. Choose one leaf that you like or that you are curious about.
2. Ask a question beginning with “I wonder...”
3. Share your I wonder question with a partner or small group (Think, Pair, Share).
4. Make an observation: Looking at your leaf, make an “I notice...” statement.
5. What do you notice about your leaf? (Think, Pair, Share).

Activity:

1. Sort your leaves by colour. How many groups did you make? Can you put them in order from Green to Yellow to Orange to Red to Brown? Share your sorting criteria with the class.
 - a. Green leaves get energy from the sun and make food for the tree.
 - b. As the temperature cools down in autumn and the days get shorter, the trees prepare to go dormant for winter (similar to the way some animals hibernate in winter).
 - c. As the food producing parts of the leaf break down the yellow and orange colors start to show. These colors were there all along but were “covered up” by the green part (chlorophyll).
2. How else can you sort your leaves? All students are invited to sort their leaves according to their own criteria. Make a list of all the sorting ideas generated by the class. Here are some things they might come up with:
 - a. Shape
 - b. Smooth edges or jagged (serrated) edges.
 - c. Texture
 - d. Smell (ie Walnut leaves smell distinctive)
 - e. Simple or Compound
 - f. Lobed or not



Extension:

1. Use the [Monster Tree Leaf Key](#) to identify the leaves in your collection!
2. Help the Outdoor Ed team map your schoolyard! Assign schoolyard trees to pairs or groups. Ask each group to [measure the circumference](#) and [submit their findings](#) to the Monster Tree Challenge. We will compare schoolyard tree data to help facilities prioritize tree planting in the schoolyards.