



The Shapes of Tree Leaves

Trees use their leaves to make food. When sunlight hits a leaf, it triggers a chain reaction called photosynthesis that produces sugars. Autumn is the perfect time to look at leaves, since so many of them are turning bright colors and falling to the ground where it's easy to take a closer look. The leaves of each tree species have their own special shape. If you examine a leaf, you can figure out what kind of tree it came from!

How many of these leaf shapes can you find in your neighborhood?

American Beech



Try to find a smooth, oval-shaped leaf with many little teeth along the sides and a pointy tip.

Silver Maple



Shaped a bit like your hand, this leaf has five "fingers" (or lobes). It's silvery underneath.

Red Oak



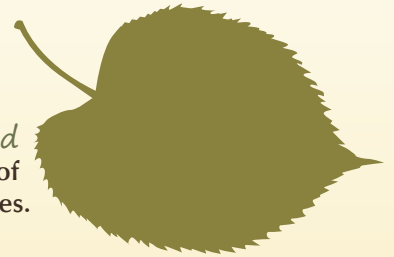
This leaf has lots of big spiky-tipped lobes sticking out all down its length.

Sassafras



It can look like an oval, a mitten, or a turkey's three-toed footprint.

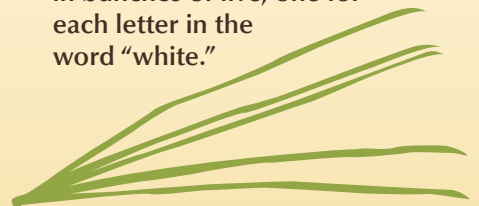
Basswood



Look for a big heart shape with lots of little spiky teeth all along the edges.

White Pine

These needle-like leaves come in bunches of five, one for each letter in the word "white."



Make Leaf Creatures

Gather leaves of different colors and shapes. Layer them on top of each other and see what animals you can make. You can add details with twigs and seeds.

