

WOODSWALK:

Talk about the change in the leaves

- a) Fall--sunlight decreases so the leaves stop photosynthesis, sap is shut off to the leaf, it loses its green color so that natural color (red, yellow, orange) appears, and it falls off.
- b) Winter--oaks still retain brown leaves, and some are still on the ground. Check the leaf buds for new growth.
- c) Spring—look for leaf buds in various stages. Notice different trees produce leaves at various times.
- d) Evergreens retain their needles year round. Note the new growth and how bare it is in the bed of pines.
- e) What happens to leaves after they fall from the tree? Look around for evidence.

Talk about the uniqueness of leaves. Look for samples to compare size, shape, and color.

Talk about seeds and the role they play in the life cycle of the woods and gardens

- a) What would happen if there were no seeds or only one kind of seed?

Talk about the uniqueness of seeds. Look for samples of seeds to compare size, shape, color, hardness.

- a) What is happening to seeds during the different seasons?
- b) Pine cones are a good source of seeds in the winter—compare open versus unopened.
- c) Bulbs are another type of seed—some like the iris produce growth in fall that lasts all winter and then resumes growing in spring while others like tulips, lie dormant. Look for natural bulbs or tubers.

How do seeds travel? Find some samples and try to find out how each travels.

- a) wind—carries cottonwood, dandelion, open sycamore balls, maple (helicopters)
- b) beggars—seeds attach to clothing or fur and are carried to a new location—thistle, burrs
- c) poppers—seed pod pops open shooting seeds everywhere, witch hazel, locust trees
- d) animal carriers—seeds are buried by animals and forgotten—squirrels plant walnuts, acorns and other nuts.
- e) Animal droppings—animals swallow seeds whole, they pass thru their bodies, and are planted by their droppings.
- f) Water—rain moves the seeds along the ground. Ponds, streams and other water washes the seeds to shore.

How do we use seeds

- a) as food for ourselves and other animals or insects—a bird feeder uses seeds to feed birds
- b) to plant and for gardens, yards, trees, forests.

During the walk, choose several trees to examine.

1. Look at the bark, trunk, branches, leaves and roots.
2. In spring and winter you may look for new growth and tree buds
3. Check the tree for injuries. Are there broken branches or marks on the bark. Why?
4. Are any animals using the tree as a home? How can you tell?

5. Give the tree a hug to see how big around it is.
6. Does the tree have any fruit, nuts, or flowers? How do these continue the life cycle of the tree?

There may be tree cuttings on display on trees that may have been cut along the paths.

1. By counting the rings you can tell the age of the tree as it adds a new layer each year.
2. The rings provide clues to climate, weather, damage to the tree, and disease.

Ask why trees are important and how we use them.

1. Purify the air and provide oxygen, provide food, are homes, make shade to cool us, firewood, for building.

These are some of the questions you can ask students as you walk. Remember at some point to stop and have the children be perfectly still and use all their senses to explore nature. How many things can they identify using their ears, noses, eyes, and sense of touch.