

Nature Challenge #6-Deciduous Trees & Summer Leaves

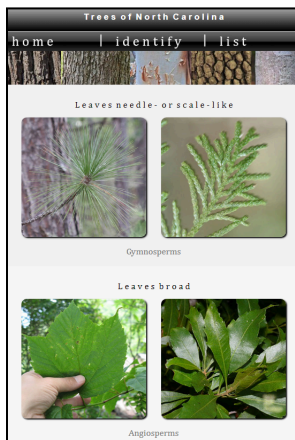
From the Natural Resources Stewardship Committee (NRSC)

Trees have important roles in this community and beyond. As trees function and grow, they improve air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen back into the air. Trees help to reduce stormwater runoff by slowing/blocking heavy rain and absorbing water. And during hot summers, tree leaves block intense sunlight, which can cool the earth below as much as 25 degrees.

As you walk or hike Connestee, stop and take time to look around at the variety of trees that adorn the naturescape. Healthy forests with diversity of tree species are vital to provide necessary food and shelter for a wide variety of wildlife.

Deciduous trees have broad leaves that typically change color and drop in the fall. They spread their seeds using flowers. Most coniferous trees have skinny leaves called needles that don't change color or shed in the fall, and spread their seeds with cones.

From broad leaves to skinny needles, all tree leaves serve the same purpose-to make food for the tree. Leaves use carbon dioxide from the air, water from the roots and sunlight to make sugar in a process called photosynthesis. This can take place only in the presence of chlorophyll—the green pigment that is found in all green plants. During photosynthesis, chlorophyll absorbs sunlight and the leaves release oxygen, which becomes part of the air that humans and animals rely on to breathe for life.



You can learn more about how to ID trees using a dichotomous key on-line at [NC State University Herbarium](https://ncsuherbarium.org/). The first step is a choice between needle or broad leaves. The next step is a choice of the leaf arrangement-alternate, opposite, or whirled. The selection at each step leads to a designated next step ultimately resulting in the identification of the tree.

Note that the CF rules and regulations prohibit the removal or disturbance of plants on any CF common natural areas, trails, or parks. Please “Leave No Trace” and avoid disturbing the natural setting of flora and other natural features. Thank you!

Summer Leaves Checklist	
Alder	
American Hornbeam	
Ash	
Black Cherry	
Black Locust	
Chestnut Oak	
Eastern Redbud	
Flowering Dogwood	
Fraser Magnolia	
Mockernut Hickory	
Northern Red Oak	
Red Maple	
Sassafras	
Scarlet Oak	
Serviceberry	
Sourwood	
Sweet Birch	
Tulip Tree	
White Oak	

[Alder](#)



[American Hornbeam](#)



[American Ash](#)



[Black Cherry](#)



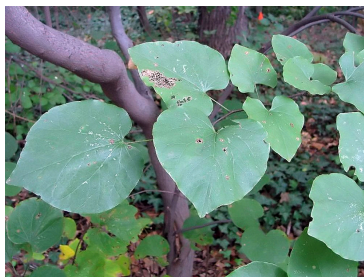
[Black Locust](#)



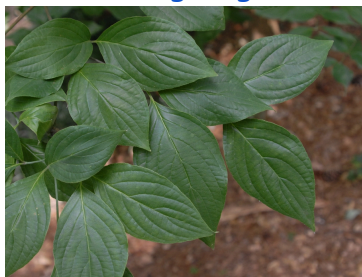
[Chestnut Oak](#)



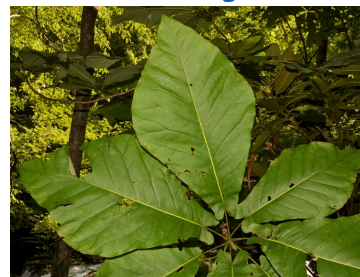
[Eastern Redbud](#)



[Flowering Dogwood](#)



[Fraser Magnolia](#)



[Mockernut Hickory](#)



[Northern Red Oak](#)



[Red Maple](#)



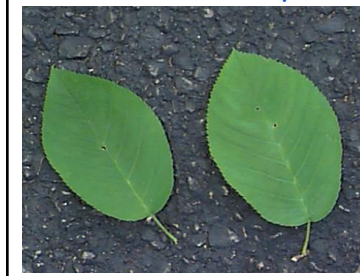
[Sassafras](#)



[Scarlet Oak](#)



[Serviceberry](#)



[Sourwood](#)



[Sweet Birch](#)



[Tulip Tree](#)



[White Oak](#)



Summer Leaves

Created by AJ Longware
and Laurel Young
for the NRSC

Photos compliments of
[NC State Extension](#)

(Blue links are active)