

KIDS' TREE TRAIL (trail begins at the end of the long meadow to the left of the restroom at the playground)

Before pioneers floated down the Ohio River to settle the City of Cincinnati, the whole area was covered by forest. Indians who lived in the woodland got nuts, fruits, medicines, firewood, and weapon handles from the forest trees. Many useful things still come from trees today.

Different kinds of trees have different types of bark and wood. Nine kinds of trees along the trail are marked by numbers on their trunks.

1. The thick bark of the Black Locust covers a yellow wood that is used to make fence posts. The wood is very heavy, very hard, and doesn't rot when placed in the ground.
2. The scaly, dark bark of Black Cherry holds a chemical that Indians used to stop their coughs, and that we still use today. Beautiful furniture is made from the Black Cherry's reddish wood.
3. Bur Oak bark is divided into long strips. The tree's strong, hard wood is used as building lumber. Squirrels and Blue Jays feed on the Bur Oak's acorns.
4. White Ash bark has diamond-shaped ridges. Baseball bats, boat oars, and tool handles are made from the tree's tough and elastic wood.
5. American Beech has smooth, gray bark that stretches as the tree grows. Can you see other Beech trees in this forest? The very hard and strong wood of the Beech is used for floorboards.
6. The bark of the Yellow Buckeye is broken into flat scales. Its large brown seeds resemble the eyes of deer. The related Ohio Buckeye is the state tree of Ohio.
7. Hackberry bark is covered by corky growths. Like the Yellow Buckeye, Hackberry has soft, weak wood that is used mainly as firewood.
8. The flat bark of White Basswood was used by Indians to cover their huts. Bees make excellent honey from the tree's flowers. Since the tree's wood has no smell, it is used to make food boxes.
9. Sugar Maple bark is smooth on young trees and broken into ridges on older trees like this one. Indians discovered how to make syrup from this tree's sap. The Sugar Maple's hard, heavy wood is made into furniture and flooring.