



# Nature Activity

## Leaf Encounters

How many different types of trees can you identify in your neighbourhood? If you're like most people, you can probably only identify a couple of different species. But the reality is that our watershed is filled with many different tree species and knowing which type of species is in your neighbourhood is a good thing – it's like getting to know your neighbours.

Autumn is a great time of year to look at leaves as one way of identifying trees because the leaves are turning colours and falling off the branches, so you can easily pick them up to examine them closely without disturbing the tree.

Of course, identifying trees based on their leaves can only be done on deciduous trees (trees with leaves). Luckily, in our watershed, there are plenty of deciduous trees to identify.

So gather some leaves around your neighbourhood and use the below key to identify how many species you can find.

## Fall colours

Leaves are made up of different pigments that determine the colour we see – chlorophyll (green), carotenoids (yellow and orange), anthocyanins (red and purple) and tannins (brown).

Chlorophyll is the dominant leaf pigment (covers up all other pigment colours) in the spring and summer. It's important for turning sunlight into plant food (sugar). As the weather cools in autumn, chlorophyll is no longer produced by the leaves (because the tree is getting ready for winter), revealing all the other beautiful pigments hidden within the leaves.

Autumn seasons with the most brilliant colours occur when we have a moist spring, dry late summer and early fall with sunny warm days and cool nights.



**American Beech**



**Basswood**



**Bur Oak**



**Red Maple**



**Red Oak**



**Silver Maple**



**Sugar Maple**



**Trembling Aspen**

Leaf Photos: Cory Byron, Justin Brodeur

Not sure what tree species your leaf is from? Ask us on Twitter @LSRCA or Instagram @lakesimcoeconservation. You can also download LeafSnap (a free app for iPhone and iPad) or visit [www.treebee.ca](http://www.treebee.ca) to do some sleuthing online.

[www.LSRCA.on.ca](http://www.LSRCA.on.ca)



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