

A key to trees



Background knowledge

Wood is a natural material. It comes from the trunks and branches of trees. Different trees produce different types of wood. Some woods, such as oak, are very hard. Others, such as balsa, are very soft. Most woods can float, but there are some that can sink, such as ebony. Wood has a distinctive smell. When you hit it with a hammer, it has a distinctive sound.

Science activity

Use this yes/no key to work out which twig is from which tree in the picture shown below. If you answer *no* to a question, move on to the next clue.

Clue 1: Does the twig have a single oval bud at the tip? If yes, it is from the horse chestnut.

Clue 2: Does the twig have black buds? If yes, it is from the ash.

Clue 3: Does the twig have lots of buds at the tip? If yes, it is from the oak.

Clue 4: Does the twig have long, thin buds? If yes, it is from the beech.

Clue 5: Does the twig have one striped bud at the tip? If yes, it is from the plane.



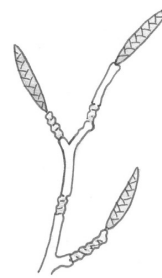
A
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B
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C
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D
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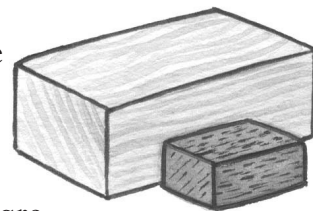


E
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Science investigation

⚠ Take extra care - ask an adult to supervise you.

Collect four samples of different woods that have not been stained or varnished. Place about six drops of blue food coloring into a cup of water. Brush each piece of wood with the mixture. Compare and contrast the way the woods look. Next, after the wood is dry, make an impression of it in rolled-out clay or playdough. Compare and contrast the impressions each wood leaves behind.



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A Oak.....

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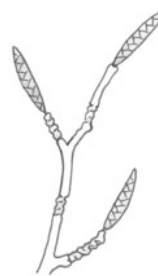
B Ash.....

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C Plane...

.....



D Beech..

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E Horse..
chestnut

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Science investigation

⚠ Help the child prepare the food coloring mixture. A pastry brush works well for applying it to the wood. Suggest that the child puts on more than one coat. Place the playdough or clay on wax paper and use a rolling pin to flatten it easily.

