

Tree Association Game

Introduction:

Tree Identification by young people is made easier when they learn to associated the pattern of a leaf or certain characteristics of a tree with other objects. By associating the way things look, feel or even smell, it leaves a lasting expression on helps you to recall what something is in the future. If you have ever been convinced to try a green persimmon, you are certain to never forget what a persimmon is.

The association game makes use of pictures to help students relate key characteristics or shapes associated with certain trees. The associations made in this game are all based on the ideas of 4-H'ers that have been previous participants in the Forestry Field Day program. There is no science involved, just a fun way to get young people to start looking for those characters and/or associations that will help them remember tree species, insects or diseases.

Preparation:

Prior to your class or training session, you should print the picture pages that follow. You will also need to collect samples of the trees listed below.. The samples may be photos, pressed specimens or fresh cut ones. The trees should be labeledwith the corresponding numbers.

The Game:

Layout the tree samples in order 1 – 14 on tables. Above the samples, layout the pictures in order according to the letter assigned to each picture. Each student should be given an answer sheet. Allow the group 5-10 minutes to match the pictures with the tree samples. After completion, go through the exercise with the students discussing how the pictures relate to the samples. What is important is not how many they got right, but rather that they learn to associate characteristics to help them remember.

Important Note:

Every student may or may not see the same association. Some will come up with ways to remember on their own which is perfectly fine.

You are not trying to so much teach association as you are trying to get the students to focus on what makes this one tree different than all the other trees in the world.

Key and Reasoning

1. **American Beech – Zig Zag (picture L):** One of the key features found in American Beech is the zig-zag appearance of the stems. At every leaf junction, the stem changes direction giving it a zig-zag appearance.
2. **Baldcypress – Feather (picture E):** Youth often associate this tree with a feather or the Bald Eagle for its soft feather like leaves.
3. **Buckeye – Eye (picture N):** The leaflets of a buckeye tree are attached in a whorl or a center location forming an eye.
4. **Eastern Cottonwood – Chocolate Kiss (picture M) :** The deltoid or triangular shape of the Cottonwood leaf has the appearance of a famous chocolate candy.
5. **Eastern Redbud – Heart (picture F):** Eastern Redbud is one of two trees that have heart shaped leaves with the redbud being the smaller of the two. The redbud leaf shape is more of a compact or true heart shape. Students often refer to this as the cupid tree because of its heart shaped leaves.
6. **Flowering Dogwood – Menorah (picture G):** The venation of the dogwood leaf branches off the center vein curving up to the tip of the leaf much like a menorah.
7. **Post oak – Cross (picture D):** The lobes of the Post Oak leaf (top three lobes) form a distinct cross. Besides, a cross is made of two “post”
8. **Red Maple – Flag (picture B) :** The maple leaf is associated with the Canadian Flag . Although it is actually a sugar maple leaf adorning the flag, young people associate the red in the flag and the maple leaf to the Red Maple.
9. **River Birch – Tree (picture C):** The leaf shape of the River Birch has the appearance of an arrow head. Some students also associate it with a cookie cutter for making tree shaped cookies.
10. **Sassafras – Ghost and Mitten (picture H):** Three distinct shape leaves can be found on the Sassafras tree. Two of the leaves have the appearance of a mitten and a ghost.
11. **Sawtooth Oak – Saw (picture I):** The Sawtooth oak has very sharp looking spines on the leaf margin giving it the appearance of a saw.
12. **Sweetgum – Star (picture J):** The leaf of the Sweetgum has a distinct star shaped appearance. Also, this was the favorite leaf to eat by Little Foot in the Land Before Time.
13. **Water Oak – Water drop (picture K) :** The leaf of a water oak has a distinct tear or water dropped shaped leaf when held by the petiole or leaf stem.
14. **Yellow- poplar – Cat’s face (picture A):** The distinct lobes of Yellow-poplar have the appearance of the outline of a cat’s face. Just draw some eyes on the leaf and you can see the ears and whiskers stand out.

Tree Association Game Answer Sheet

Record the letter of the picture next to the name of the tree that most closely matches that tree specimen.

1. **American Beech** _____
2. **Baldcypress** _____
3. **Buckeye** _____
4. **Eastern Cottonwood** _____
5. **Eastern Redbud** _____
6. **Flowering Dogwood** _____
7. **Post oak** _____
8. **Red Maple** _____
9. **River Birch** _____
10. **Sassafras** _____
11. **Sawtooth Oak** _____
12. **Sweetgum** _____
13. **Water Oak** _____
14. **Yellow- polar** _____

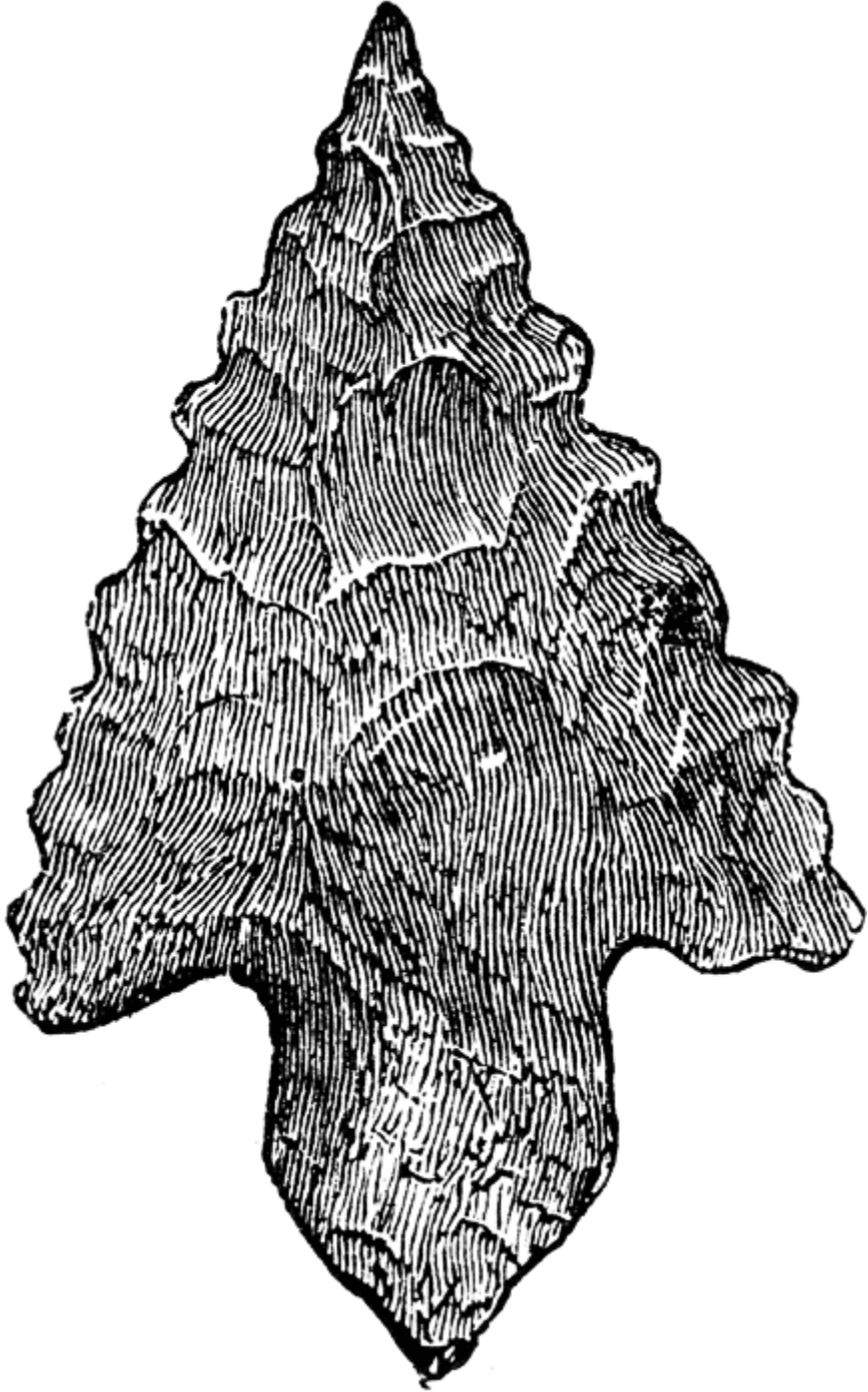
A



B



C



D



E



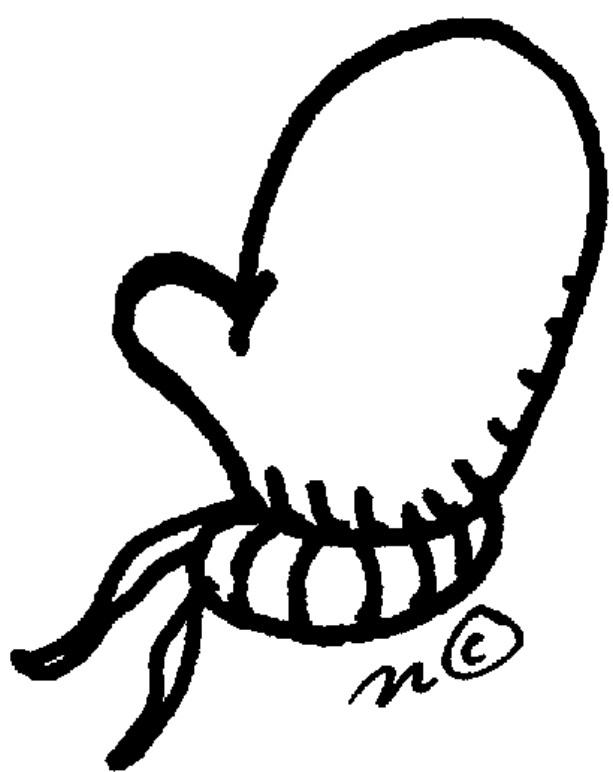
F



G



H



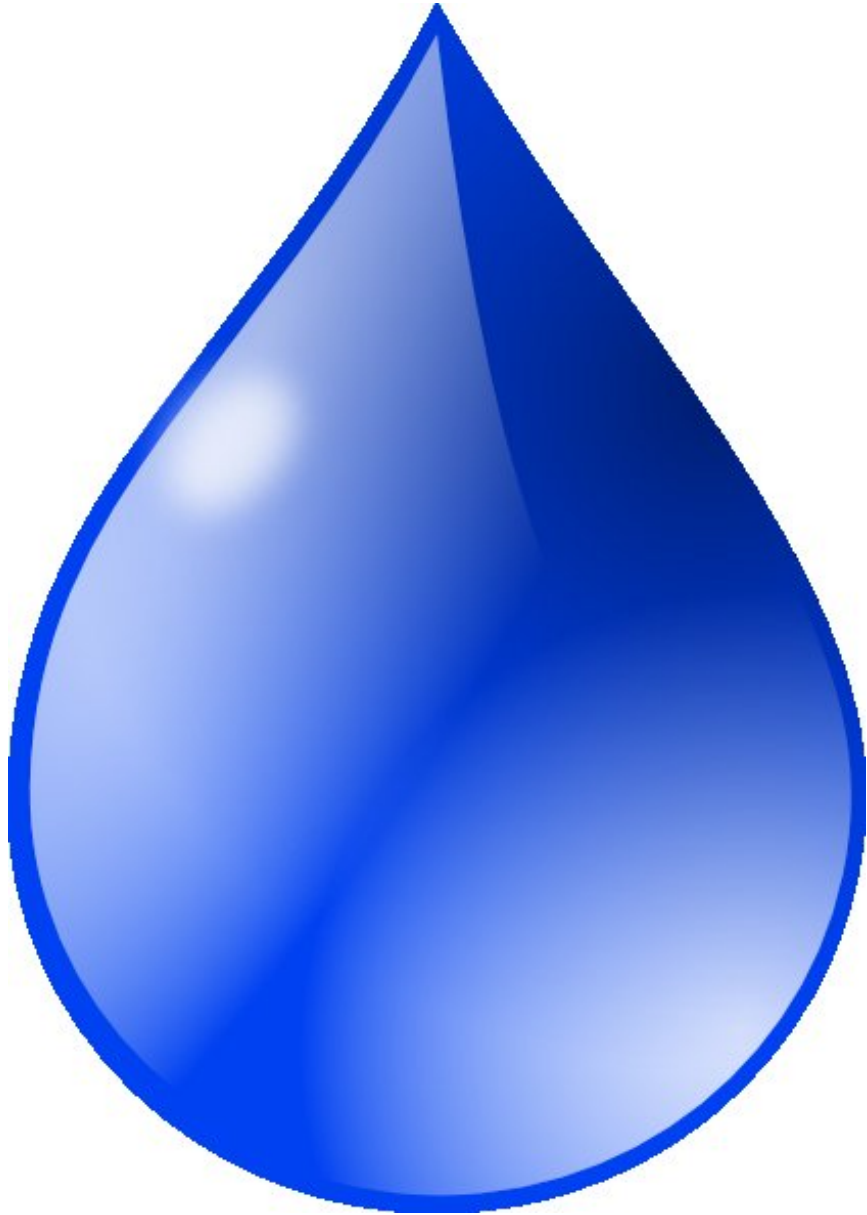
I



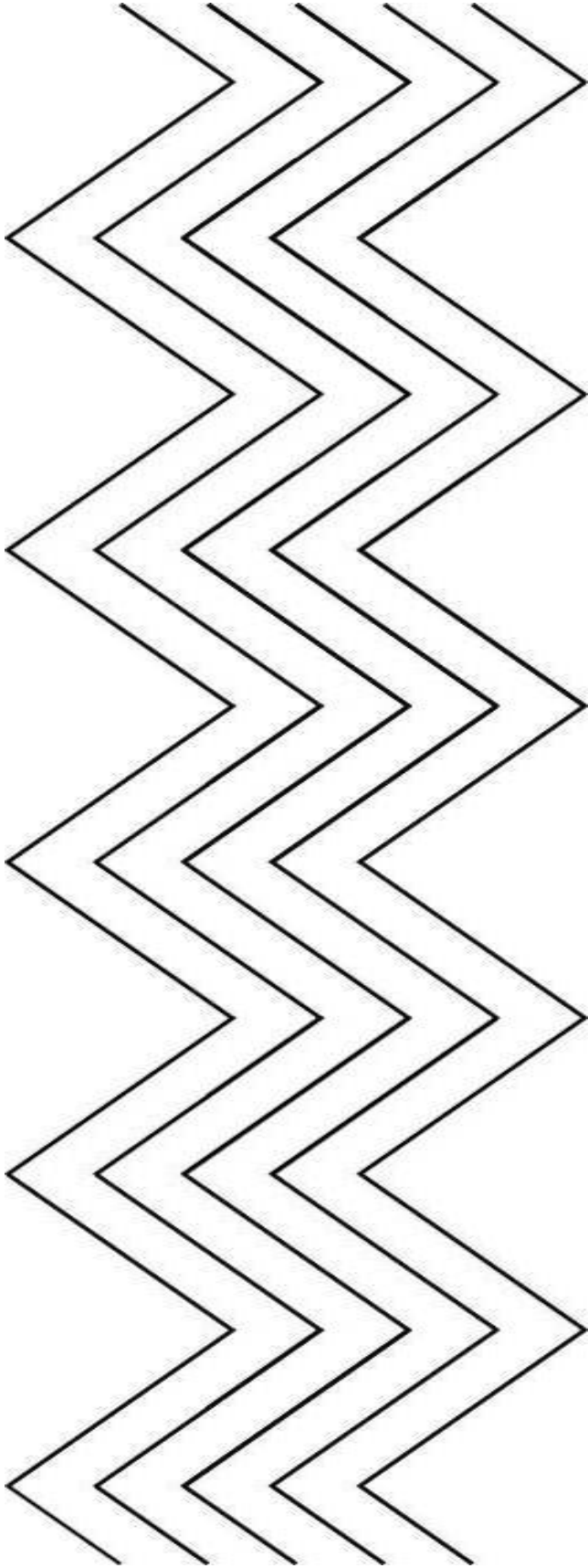
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