Working Trees

A coloring book and activity guide to teach the importance of trees, and the many jobs they perform in our environment.

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Rocky Mountain Region

Distributed by:
National Agroforestry Center
Rocky Mountain Forest & Range Experiment Station
Lincoln, Nebraska

What is a Working Tree? Many trees have jobs they perform, just like people! Some perform many jobs at the same time. Like people trees come in all shapes and sizes. Some tree shapes look triangular, square, circular, weeping, fat, short, tall and skinny. Look out in your neighborhood and draw some of the different tree shapes that you see.

Working Trees that produce air, food, medicine and soil additives are **The Spruce-it-up Team, Granny Smith, Dr. Yew Remedy** and **Hack & Berry.** All trees are important in making oxygen (this is what we need to breathe) for the whole planet.

Working Trees that protect and shelter us from the elements (snow, rain, wind, sun) are **Al Pine, Gusty Buster** and **Mr. Cool.** Some trees (like **Elmer Critterhouse**) not only protect us from the environment, but they give shelter as a home for animals, birds and insects. These are just a few examples of what trees can do for you, in your own neighborhood. Make a list of what kind of jobs you think that your trees are doing.

All trees have their own special beauty. Some flower, some change colors, some dance in the wind and some keep their foliage (leaves or needles) all year long. When these trees are in your neighborhood they make it beautiful, too! Make a list of the different colors of flowers and leaves you see in your neighborhood.

Elmer Critterhouse provides a home for many animals and insects. Count how many different birds, squirrels, bugs and other animals you see in just one tree.

Hack & Berry are like gardeners. They help the soil under them by dropping leaves and seeds. The leaves mulch the soil and feed bugs, and microscopic organisms. The seeds sprout and make baby trees. Sometimes bugs and animals like to eat the young trees.

The Spruce-it-up Team, like all trees, help clean the air. They breathe in carbon dioxide (this is what we breathe out) and turn it into oxygen (this is what we need to breathe in).

Granny Smith provides food for not only people, but for animals and insects too! Look around your neighborhood and see how many fruit or nut trees you can find.

Dr. Yew Remedy, like many trees, can produce ingredients that a pharmacist can use to make medicine. Some of the medicine helps to cure disease and others are used to treat different illness.

Mr. Cool protects all that are under his shade. Flowers, animals, insects and people enjoy escaping the heat. On a hot sunny day stand in the shade of a tree and notice how much cooler it is under there.

Al Pine works as a snow blocker in the winter time. Many animals and people, too, can find shelter from the cold blowing snow under Al Pine and his cousins.

Gusty Buster has a very important job. Most trees will help block the wind so plants, people, animals, insects and you, too, won't blow away!