

Ontario Envirothon 2023

CHALLENGE 1: ID A TREE

Trees are all around us, on our streets, in our parks, and, of course, in our forests. They are living features that are intrinsically valuable to our community and local landscape.

Our first Ontario Envirothon challenge of the year is focused on tree identification, where registered teams are tasked with observing and identifying 15 trees. Any member of the team can post these observations. For your observations to count towards the challenge, you must list at least 3 identifying features in the “notes” field of each observation to justify your identification.

Here are some resources that might help you in identifying trees;

- Tree wheel, to identify coniferous trees.
- Winter Tree Key
- Identifying Deciduous Trees in Winter (video)
- Tree Bee, and a tutorial (video)
- Measuring the Forest (video)

When photographing trees, there are a few things you will need to snap shots of for the ID to be confirmed, especially with dormant deciduous trees. Three features that are important to get an accurate identification are;

- Bark
- Buds
- Branches



Fig 1: Example of a complete iNaturalist observation, with images of an entire red oak tree, an acorn, and the leaf. Different parts of the tree are identifiable at different times of the year, so be sure to take clear photos of whatever clues you may find.

Three photographs showcasing different parts of the plant in question will allow other naturalists to confirm the identifying features you have listed in the “notes” field on the observation.

While you are outside, keep an eye out for other weeds, wild vegetation, and signs of local wildlife. Consider adding them as sightings to the iNaturalist project! They might not count towards this challenge, but it is good practice for future challenges.

GOAL:

- As a team, identify 15 trees. You must list at least three (3) key identifying features in the “notes” field of each observation to justify your reasoning.
- Measure three (3) of the trees as you are identifying them; find the DBH and/or height of the tree, as outlined in this handout. Post these measurements in the “notes” field!
- Please [fill out this form](#) when your team has completed the challenge.

NOTES:

