



A Youth Gardening project
sponsored by The Gardeners of America

Meet My Terrific Tree!

Welcome to a special project designed for youths of all ages: Meet My Terrific Tree! You can start at any time of the year to observe your tree during every season, giving you 365 days to enjoy and appreciate your tree. Prepare yourself for exciting projects, experiments, activities, opportunities, and much, much more! Some activities you will want to do yourself; sometimes you will want others to share in your fun.

Things you should know before getting started:

1. **Find your tree.** It should be close enough for you to visit often.
2. **You'll report your details and discoveries online.** At the end of every season, send all your work to the National Youth Gardening Chair, Cheri Kessen, at goafortwayne@gmail.com
3. **Find your pace.** You don't have to do a check mark beside the ones you completed.
4. **Plan ahead.** Before going to visit your tree, make sure you have what you will need to take with you to complete your assignment.
5. **Show us!** Send us your drawings, poems and stories that you write.
6. **Make memories!** Maybe keep a Tree scrapbook of photos or diary to record your visits and what you saw.
7. **Be yourself!** Add anything you want, or try something different anytime during the correct season.
8. **Official Stuff.** The Gardeners of America needs signed permission from your parent or guardian to place pictures and names in promotional materials.

Parent/Guardian's name (Print) _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Circle: Parent or Guardian

Parent's Address _____

Parent's Phone _____ Email _____

We're excited to Meet Your Terrific Tree and hope you soon will be very excited, too. Let's get going!

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My name is _____ Age _____

I named my tree _____

Where is it growing? _____

What kind of tree is it? _____

Tell us more about your tree.

Why did you pick this tree?

What do you like best about your terrific tree?

This project observes meteorological seasons. Meteorological summer falls during the hottest three months – June, July and August in the United States.

Meteorological Summer

June 1 – August 31

A. Get to know your tree.

1. **Hug your tree.** If your tree is big, you will need some helpers to reach all around it. How many helpers did it take to join hands around your tree? _____
2. Ask someone to take a picture of you hugging your tree.
3. **Touch** the bark with your hands, arms and bare feet. What did it feel like?

4. **Look** closely at the bark with a magnifying glass. What did you see?



5. **Make a tree bark rubbing** by using a white piece of paper (taped to the tree or held by a helper) and a dark-colored crayon or soft pencil to lightly rub until the pattern of the bark appears on your paper.

6. Slowly **walk around your tree** several times, looking closely at the bark. What do you see?

Hopefully, you do not see any carvings into the bark. This is very bad for your tree. The bark is the outer-most protective layer of the tree, like your skin. It protects your tree. If cut or carved, just like we would bleed blood, your tree's sap would flow out.

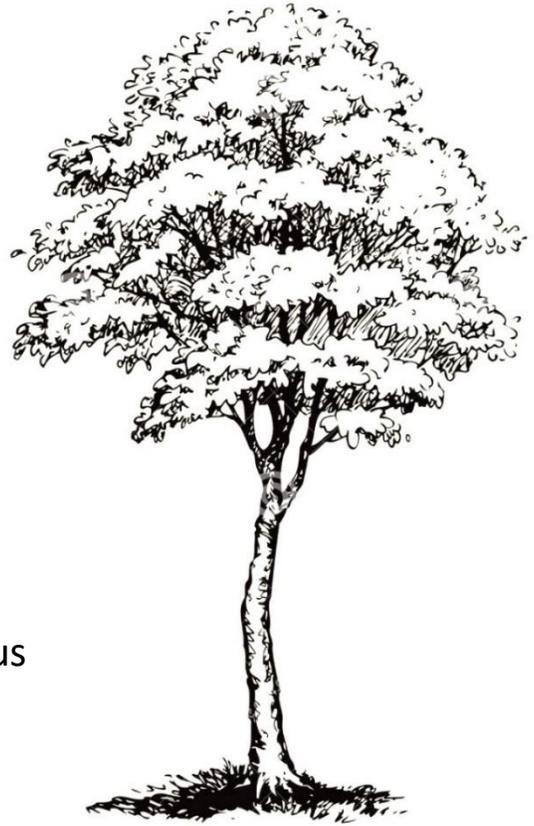
7. **Does your tree smell?** (Not all do.) If possible, find a dead twig on the ground and smell it. Scratch the twig with your fingernail and smell again. Find a whole leaf, rub and crush it and smell again.

B. Observe your tree.

1. **Draw** and color a picture of your tree showing its shape.
2. **Sit** under or close to your tree and **read** the book *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein.
3. **Lie under your** tree and look up. Imagine what you would see. What did you think about?
4. **Pretend you are a tree** and write a story about what it feels like to be a tree.

5. Is anything living in or around your tree?

Make a list:



6. What do the leaves look like? Tell us about their shape and color.

7. Press a leaf in a flower press or place in a heavy book with wax paper covering both sides of the leaf. Leave it alone until it is dry.

8. Try this experiment. Trees move water up from their roots in their trunk, out to their leaves and into the air. Go out on a sunny day and put a clear, plastic bag over a small batch of leaves. Tie the open end of the bag around the branch. Check back in one hour and look at the bag. What do you see?

9. Take your family or gather some buddies and go **have a picnic** under or next to your tree.



Summer Summary

1. Summer is ending and it's time to **send in your report, by August 31**. Send it to Cheri Kessen, the National Youth Gardening Chair, at goafortwayne@gmail.com
2. I had the most **fun** with my tree doing:
3. Have you done anything with your tree that was not in your reports?
4. Tell us **something you learned** from your tree:
5. **Write a short letter** to your Terrific Tree explaining how much you have enjoyed doing things together this summer.