

THE DARK FOREST



You have just entered the forest.

Did you notice any changes as you entered the forest?

Forests can be dark. The forest canopy is made up of tree branches that capture a lot of sunlight before it reaches the forest floor. Trees provide shade on sunny days and shelter from the rain.

You have entered a small plantation of Ponderosa Pine trees. These trees and many of the trees in this forest have been planted by College of Forestry researchers and students who wanted to learn more about trees and the how they grow.



Activity!

Take a moment to find a pine cone.
Pick them up gently!

Why Gently? Some of them are spiky!
These are Ponderosa Pine cones. Look at the needles all over the ground. How many needles are in each bunch? Three!

These three long needles help us identify these Ponderosa Pine.

- Are the needles always in threes?
- Can you find a cone that is not spikey?



These are Douglas-fir cones – some people think it looks like little mice are trying to jump into the scale head first!

- Can anyone find Douglas fir needles?
- How are they different from the Ponderosa Pine?



Let's Learn!

In the forest we will see many different shapes, colors and textures. There are lots of different species of trees in the forest. Each tree species has unique leaves or needles, cones, seeds and bark. That helps us identify different tree species from one another.

Can you find any of the different species on your scavenger hunt sheet?

Keep looking on your hike!

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Living Layers

Trees grow very tall and create many different spaces for other species to live and grow.

Activity!

Questions

- Where would you like to live in the forest if you were a forest animal?
- What do you think would make a good forest home or shelter?
- What do you see that you could use to make a shelter in this forest?

Let's Learn! Plants, animals and fungus live in all sorts of nooks and crannies of living and dead trees. Birds build nests on the forest floor and all the way into the crown of the tree. Woodpeckers use their strong bills to drill into tree trunks making homes for themselves and many other birds and animals. Insects and salamanders can be found inside and underneath fallen logs. Lots of organisms are found in the soil! Forests are full of life – or as scientists say “biodiversity”.

Let's all Say a big Science Word: “Bio-di-vers-ity!”

Classroom/Home Activity: Watch what happens when you dry out a wet Douglas-fir cone, or put a dry cone into a glass of water. You can leave them in a glass of water overnight, or allow wet ones to dry out overnight. Then switch activities. The cone scales will open and close! The scales protect the growing seeds.



Follow the trail to the
next stopping point



...THE WHITE OAK