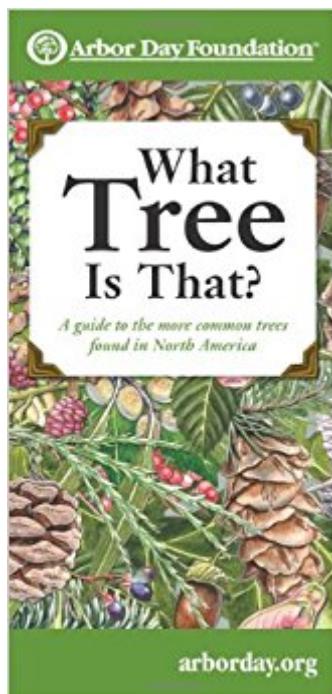


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# What Tree Is That?: A Guide To The More Common Trees Found In North America (Mom's Choice Awards Recipient)



## **Synopsis**

The Arbor Day Foundation's What Tree Is That? is a unique field guide that uses a step-by-step approach to identify common trees of the United States and Canada. The fully illustrated, 164-page book helps readers recognize more than 250 varieties based on trunk bark, leaf margins and textures, pods, nuts, and the arrangement of leaves on twigs. Focusing on specific characteristics, this easy-to-use field guide poses a series of questions paired with botanical illustrations to help classify the tree in question. Created by the world's largest nonprofit devoted to trees and the environment, this guide offers a proven classification method for people of all ages--from youth to adult, amateur to professional. The guide is a practical educational tool containing both the common and scientific names of trees and measurements in both inches and centimeters. Equipped with a durable, water-resistant cover, this 8 1/2" x 4-inch companion guide slips easily into a pocket for easy reference on hikes.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I admit to not being much of a dyed-in-the-wool environmentalist ... until recently, that is. Now all that is changing. I'm actively trying to cultivate the tree-hugger in me these days. When I hug a tree, though, I'd like to know its name. Regretfully, I am pretty clueless about knowing how to look at a tree and tell you either its common name or its scientific appellation. So I got a book to help. It's by the Arbor Day Foundation, and it's called *What Tree Is That?* This "guide to the more common trees found in North America" is turning me into a savant of silviculture. Yesterday I took it to a nearby arboretum -- actually, a tree-labeled stretch of the walking path around Wilde Lake in Columbia,

Maryland -- in order to see whether it would guide me to the same tree designations as are posted on the signs in front of the trees. It did! You have to play a game to identify a tree. First -- after you turn to the proper section of the book, for either the Eastern U.S. or the Western U.S. -- you are asked to answer whether the tree has needles, or scale-like leaves that hug the twig, or leaves that are flat and thin. The first two are types of conifer or evergreen, while the latter represents broadleaf, deciduous trees. I chose the latter, and was directed to the next question. It asked me to distinguish between trees whose leaves have just one single blade attached to each stalk or petiole, in which case the leaf is simple; more than one blade per petiole, in which case the leaf is compound; or fan-shaped leaves multiply attached to short, spur-like branches, in which case the tree is a ginkgo. I chose option two. The next question wanted me to say whether the compound leaves were opposite or alternate. If the former, each pair of blades or leaflets on either side of the stalk or axis (except for the end leaflet, that is) attach to the stalk at the same exact point. If the latter, unpaired leaflets appear on alternate sides of the stalk. My quarry's compound leaves were of the alternate variety. The next question was, in effect, did the leaflets themselves have leaflets? If so, the leaf would be not just pinnately compound, but twice pinnately compound, a.k.a. bipinnate. (I seem to not have needed to answer whether my tree's compound leaves were palmate, meaning that leaflets are arranged to form an outline like the palm of a hand with fingers splayed apart.) My leaves were just pinnately compound. Next, were the side buds (which, I imagine, are the places where new twigs can emerge from existing twigs) hidden by the leaf base, or exposed? If hidden, that would mean the tree's fruit (none of which was actually in evidence) was a pod or legume. Best I could tell, there were no side buds in evidence. (Had they been, a quick look ahead in the book told me I was en route to identifying a tree-of-heaven, an American mountain-ash, a European mountain-ash, a black walnut, or a butternut. I decided to press ahead along the no-exposed-buds logic path and come back if it left me high and dry -- which, as it turns out, it didn't.) Per the next question, large, 2-4" blades/leaflets would have ID'ed my tree as a yellowwood ... but I was looking at small leaflets of less than 2" in length. Next, the book wanted me to say whether the tree's fruit was in a long, brown, leathery pod. I saw no fruit to judge by, but the book also suggested that "native trees" of this same type have "long, branched thorns." I saw no thorns, either, so I took a chance and said the tree was not a honeylocust. That meant its identity depended on answering just one final question. If the leaflet blades' tips were not angled or pointed, but rounded, the tree would have been a black locust, and presumably its twigs would have borne spines or prickles. But, no, the blades were rounded, and there were no spines or prickles .... which made the tree, supposedly, a Japanese pagodatree. Say what? I'd never heard of a Japanese pagodatree. Was I on the wrong

continent? It was time to inspect the arboretum's signage for the tree. Oops! The sign said it was a Chinese scholar tree! Had I been led down the garden path? Luckily, I noticed that the Latin name on the sign was *Sophora japonica* ... and then I noticed that that name was printed in the book below *Styphnolobium japonicum*, which the book says is the current name of the tree formerly known as *Sophora japonica*! The Chinese scholar tree and the Japanese pagodatree are the same tree! And my experience thus far with *What Tree Is That?* is an unqualified success! Highly recommended.

I know nothing about trees but I am interested in them. In the past I had used other tree ID guides when hiking and had a difficult time pin pointing what exact tree I was looking at. With this book it is easy and the series of questions lead me to the tree in front of me.

For those who know little or nothing about trees, this book is a comprehensive and easy-to-follow tree identification resource. That is not to say that it is not for those with an understanding of trees. With the use of this book, one can easily identify and learn a great number of details about any of the trees common to the United States. The illustrations are absolutely wonderful and clear. I have a good many books about plants (including trees), but I believe this is the definitive resource I will most often use when dealing with trees.

This is a great guide for those new to tree identification, hikers, gardeners, or those that work in the nursery field. There is nothing better on the market. I highly recommend this to Master Gardeners, Tree Stewards, Colleges, and Local Extension Offices. My local office is ordering a box full to use in the on-going Master Gardener class.

Nice beginner introduction to one aspect of identifying trees. Completely ignores tree shape, bark, and trunk pattern, etc. Too few trees listed. Of the 9 species in wooded area behind my house, I could only find 2 in book.

While not something considered a must know for most, knowledge of trees can be handy in certain situations. "What Tree is That: A Guide to the More Common Trees Found in North America" is a guide to understanding America's diversity when it comes to its trees. A complete and comprehensive reference investigating over two hundred and fifty breeds of tree, "What Tree is That" is an easy to use reference. "What Tree is That" is educational and highly recommended.

This book is well-illustrated & very thoughtfully laid out! It's arranged in a logical "go-no go" manner to help you quickly identify the tree. (Don't try to open in the middle & go from there. Start at the beginning, follow the simple steps, and you'll soon have it identified.) -- It's also a nice size & has a good protective cover.

I found this to be a great book for it's intended purposes, but it would be nice to know that you won't find much luck identifying trees by their bark or other fall/winter characteristics.

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