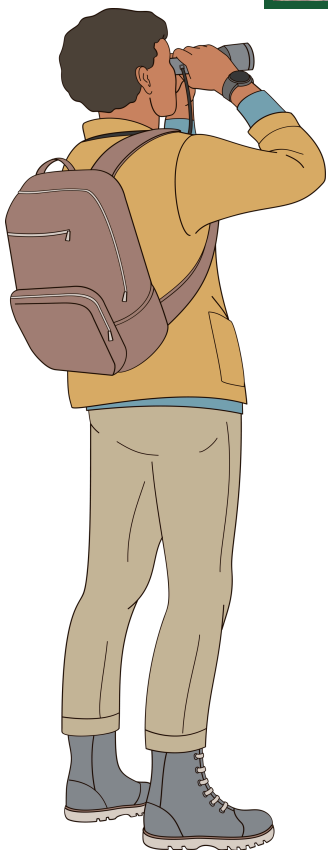


Riverside Park
Conservancy



COUNCIL
MEMBER
GALE BREWER

Hippo Playground Tree Journal



City of Forest Day October 3rd, 2026

Use this field journal to record your observations as you explore the trees of Hippo Playground at Riverside Park.

Name: _____

Listening Exercise



Instructions: Pick your favorite tree and quietly sit next to it for minute or two. Listen to the trees, animals, and people around you. What sounds do you hear?

- ☐ Birds chirping or singing
- ☐ Leaves rustling
- ☐ Wind blowing
- ☐ Insects buzzing
- ☐ Cars passing
- ☐ Squirrels chattering
- ☐ People enjoying the playground
- ☐ Dogs barking
- ☐ Other: _____



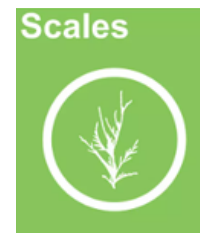
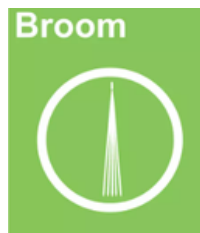
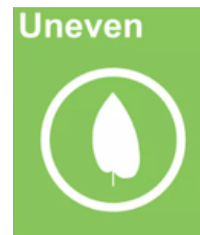
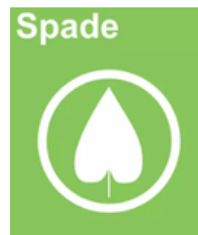
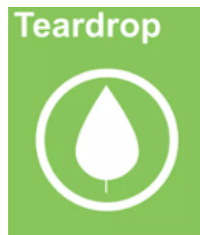
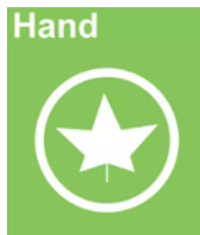
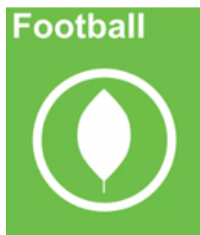
What animals did you hear that might call your tree home?

My Favorite Tree



Instructions: Find a leaf from your tree and trace it in the space below.

Circle the shape that best matches the leaf that you traced above.



My Favorite Tree



Hold this page against your tree and use a crayon to create a rubbing of the bark in the space below.

How does the bark on your tree feel? Circle the words that describe your bark or add your own.

Rough

Smooth

Dry

Damp

Scaly

Cracked

Bumpy

Papery

Common Trees in Hippo Playground



Instructions: Now that you have observed the leaves and bark of your tree, check out the options below and circle which species you think your tree is.



Northern Pin Oak
(*Quercus palustris*)



Northern Red Oak
(*Quercus rubrum*)



Eastern Redbud
(*Cercis canadensis*)



Black Locust
(*Robinia pseudoacacia*)



London Plane
(*Platanus × hispanica*)



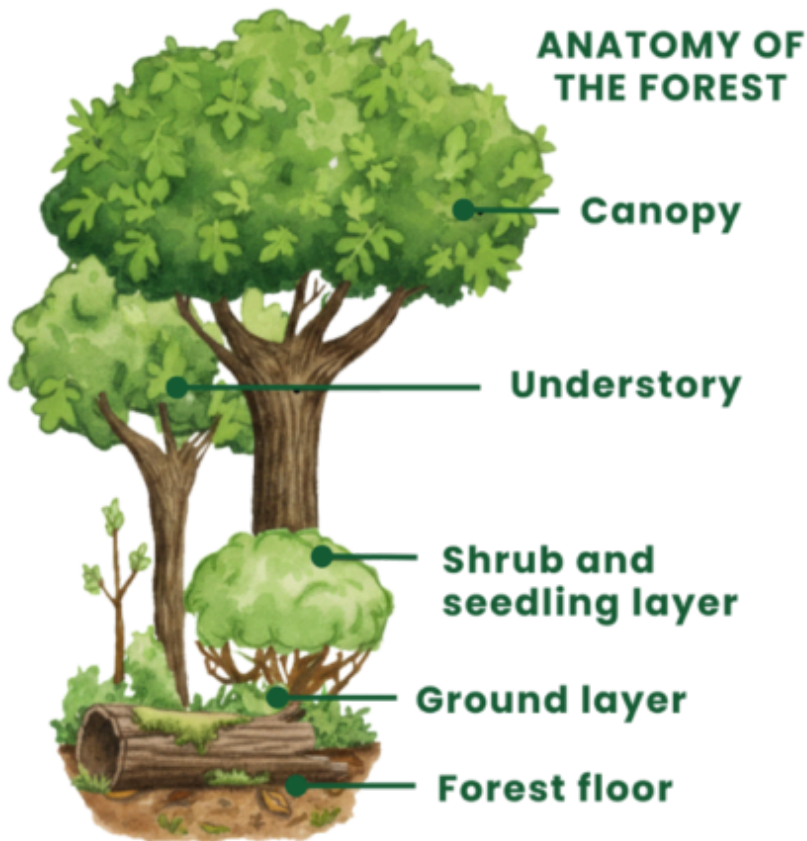
River Birch
(*Betula nigra*)



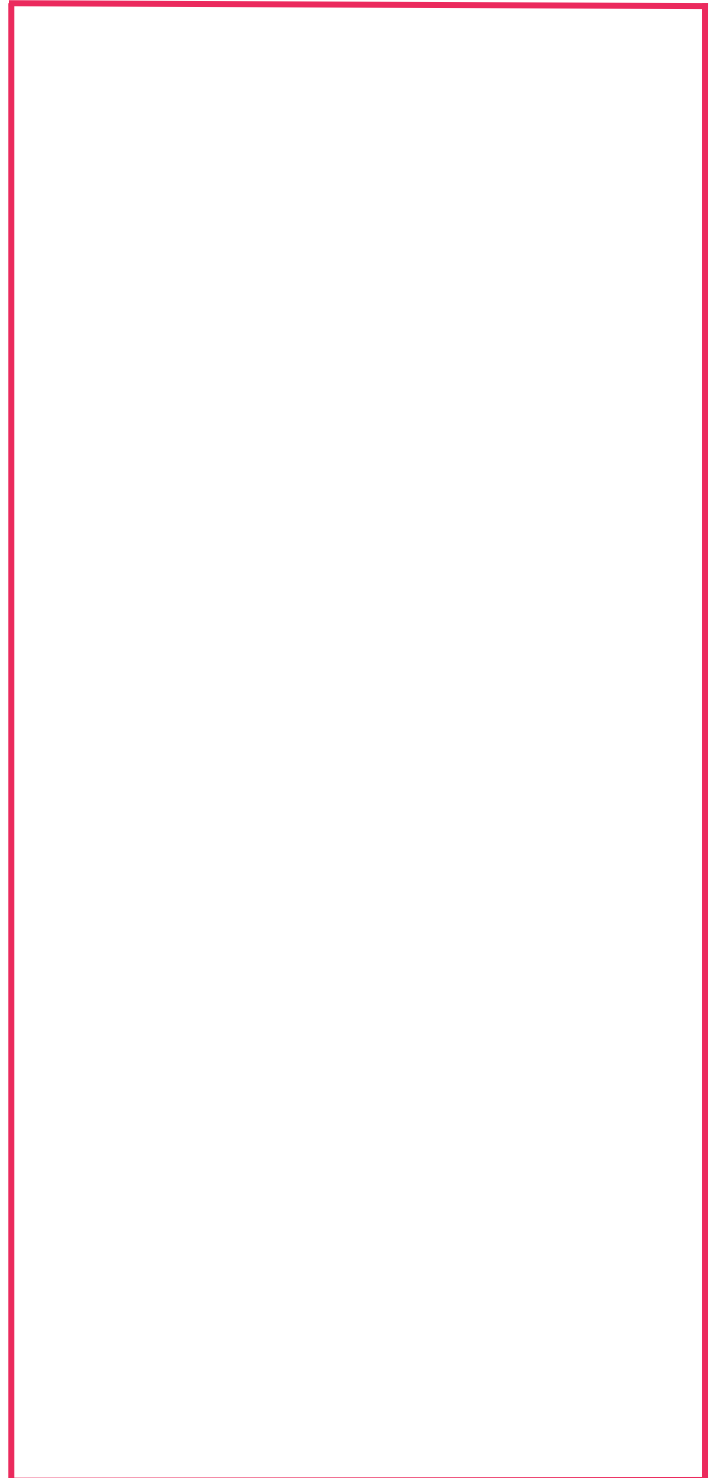
Forest Observation



Instructions: Check out the diagram below. Circle the layer of the forest that you think your tree is in. Underline the layers of the forest that are missing near your tree.



In the space to the right, sketch your tree. Then, sketch the missing forest layers around it.



**Observation is how all of science starts.
Keep your eyes and ears on the natural
world around you — you may be
surprised what you encounter!**



Exploring nature can leave you with a lot of questions....
Write down any questions that your observations
brought up in the space below:



*Congratulations on identifying your tree!
You are officially an Ecologist in training!*



Want to do more community science? Using iNaturalist is a great way to identify the birds and trees you see and connect with others!

Check out our iNaturalist project at
[riversp.co/inat](https://www.riversp.co/inat)

Interested to see what trees are on your block?

Check out the NYC Parks Tree Map at
nycgovparks.org/tree-map

Donate. Volunteer. Attend an event.
riversideparknyc.org | 212.870.3070



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