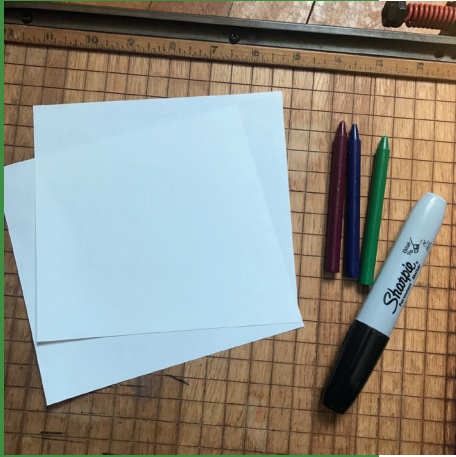


## CITY TREES AND THEIR BARK

Trees are everywhere in the city! This activity is a great and simple addition to an urban nature walk for kids ages 3 and up.

## SUPPLIES



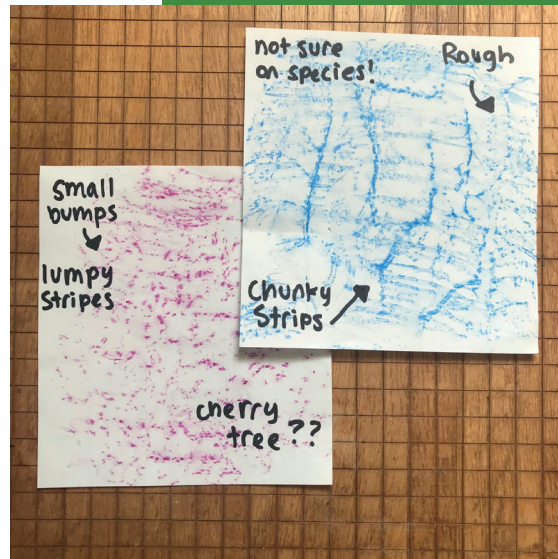
Markers  
Peeled crayons  
Paper

## INSTRUCTIONS

Head outside with your supplies. Find a tree trunk at least 4 inches wide, the wider the better. You can also use a stump or log- as long as it has bark on it! Hold paper up to the bark, and show how to rub the crayon long-ways against the paper. Be sure to apply enough pressure to show the texture underneath. Kids may need help with this.

Once you have a clear texture, compare the rubbing to the tree bark itself. Notice how the rubbing mirrors the texture on the tree! Find a second tree, and repeat! Make rubbings of as many different-looking tree barks as you want.

## TAKING IT FURTHER



Ask your kids: what does bark do? What words can we use to describe bark, from color to texture to smell? Is all tree bark the same, or different? Go through your rubbing drawings and have your kids use these descriptive words to label their bark. Scientists do this in their sketchbooks to show observations they've made, and to help them remember features of different species (types) of plants!

Compare your labelled rubbings. Do any of them share features, or have the same describing words? Do you think they could be from the same type of tree? What makes them look similar, or different?



Post about your adventures and tag us at @gpconservatory or use the hashtag "#gpcathome"! This work is supported by a grant from PNC Foundation for education with young children. We are grateful for their support of our programs at the Conservatory.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT BARK

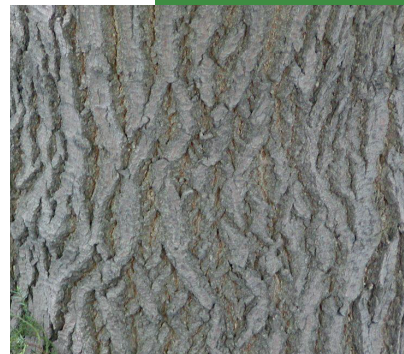
Bark is the outermost layer of the tree, and protects the tree's insides from harm. Bark keeps the tree from losing too much water when it's hot out. It insulates the tree in extreme weather, keeping it from getting too hot or too cold. And, bark protects the tree from burrowing bugs and diseases!

The life of a city-tree may differ from a forest-tree. What extra challenges do trees face in the city? Does bark help them face these challenges?

Here are some examples of common trees in Chicago and their bark. Do any of these match the rubbings you've made, or the trees you found? If you think you've identified one, label it!



**GREEN ASH**  
*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*



**BOX ELDER**  
*Acer negundo*



**AMERICAN ELM**  
*Ulmus americana*



**SWAMP OAK**  
*Quercus bicolor*



**SILVER MAPLE**  
*Ace saccharinum*