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Bark: A Field Guide To Trees Of The Northeast



Synopsis

Many people know how to identify trees by their leaves, but what about when those leaves have fallen or are out of reach? With detailed information and illustrations covering each phase of a tree's lifecycle, this indispensable guidebook explains how to identify trees by their bark alone. Chapters on the structure and ecology of tree bark, descriptions of bark appearance, an easy-to-use identification key, and supplemental information on non-bark characteristics—all enhanced by over 450 photographs, illustrations, and maps—will show you how to distinguish the textures, shapes, and colors of bark to recognize various tree species, and also understand why these traits evolved. Whether you're a professional naturalist or a parent leading a family hike, *Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast* is your essential guide to the region's 67 native and naturalized tree species.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“This reviewer always assumed that bark was too variable to use as a primary characteristic for tree identification, but natural history/tree researcher Wojtech has proven him wrong . . .

Recommended. Choice “Periderm and lenticels are generally not topics to inspire poetry or jump-start conversations, but naturalist Michael Wojtech's *Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast* may change that. Packed with cocktail-party ready facts and an easy-to-use identification guide for 67 Northeastern species, the surprisingly readable text is a must-have for both tree nerds and new-to-nature types. Adirondack

Life “This book will be a great addition to other tree books that we use in the field. No native

tree shall go unidentified!
New York Flora Association Blog
“Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast provides a unique look at some of the most majestic components of the northeastern flora and is a wonderful alternative to more traditional keys based on leaf or twig traits.”
Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society

“The section on how bark is formed and the discussion of possible advantages of different bark styles
thick bark protects from fire; photosynthesis can take place beneath thin bark
help prepare the reader for the serious business of identifying a tree just by looking carefully at its bark. But this is not as daunting a task as you might imagine: the detailed keys and descriptions and the excellent photographs make matching bark to tree an enjoyable and gratifying process.”
(Virginia Barlow, co-editor, Northern Woodlands)
“Bark
the tissue and the book
is elegant. As part of a tree’s basic structure bark is always present, is critical to a tree’s function and survival, and provides a diagnostic feature unique to every species. This surprising and engaging volume enhances one’s vision for trees and the diverse natural history that they support. Delve into it to expand your awareness and comprehension of nature.”
(David R. Foster, director, Harvard Forest, Harvard University)

Bark alone simply does not give enough info to reliably identify most unknown deciduous trees in winter. But this book is a terrific aid for overall tree identification and has helped me identify many unknown trees. With the help of a leaf sample you can very accurately ID most trees that grow in the NE. Also, this book makes you look closely at bark and notice how details differ during the life-span of trees. I hope the author will write another book on tree bark, expanding the geographical range of trees covered a bit more.

I thought this guide would only be useful in the winter, but it’s also great when trees are so high that you can’t see their leaves well. For example in my area (NJ/PA) the tulip trees are sometimes really tall, above the rest of the canopy, so although they have distinctive leaves, the leaves are hard to see. Wojtech’s book helped me notice that tulip trees sometimes have whitish areas between the bark ridges, which is really distinctive. It has a good intro section to help you understand how to think about bark development, and it has a clear, easy to use key to help you narrow down which trees you might be looking at. The bark pictures in this book are really good, I know because now I’ve tried to take some of my own, and it’s hard!

When there is only bark to identify a tree....and maybe its bud type and leaf scars, then here's the book that provides photos, scale, and color to inform of the beauty and distinguishing features of our NE trees. About 25 pages of Key are included, but the most effective thing is the photos with items that give a sense of scale...vital not only to identification but also to this wonderful thing called bark and how it grows, changes through a maturation process, and charms us into being tree worshippers. 67 trees in this book. 450+ photos....lots of tips and nice comments about uses and history of these trees.

A gift for my daughter, she is thrilled with it. It has a lot of information in it that will help her to identify the trees she is not sure of.

This book, the extended outcome of a master's thesis, delivers just what it promises. The first 85 pages are largely text, although with illustrations, covering "How to Use This Field Guide," "Bark Structure," "Bark Types," "Secondary Identification Keys," and "Bark Ecology." I've read many tree books, though not a botanist at all, and this one is quite clear. Although the chapters just mentioned can for the most part be read separately, the book is indeed set up as a key. First you figure out which of the seven major types of bark you're looking at: 1. Peeling Horizontally in Curly Strips, 2. Lenticels Visible, 3. Smooth/Unbroken, 4. Vertical Cracks or Seams in Otherwise Smooth Bark, 5. Vertical Strips, 6. Scales or Plates, or 7. Ridges and Furrows. Then you follow the indications to go to the sub-types. Best of all, for me, in the next 180 or so pages, 67 typical northeastern trees are covered, with actual pictures of young, mature, and old bark for each species. Anyone who has ever suffered through trying to match a single picture in a field guide to a tree right in front of her, when the age of the tree in the picture and the age of the tree in the field not matching, knows just how frustrating it can be to work with just one picture. For example, seeing the three pictures for snakebark maple in this book took me back to a hike on which I was looking at an older tree, which by its leaves certainly seemed like a snakebark, but without the whitish-greenish lines. If I'd had this book, I'd have been able to know--even if I kept the book at home and just looked at it then. The book could get 4 or 5 stars. I'd like to have had a clearer presentation, ideally with one overall diagram, of the layers of bark; I found the discussion of the two growth layers a bit confusing. And it would be great if the book covered more trees, especially those that we city-dwellers might more often see than some of the forest trees here. But overall--a fine book!

Bought for a friend who's a tree hugger and loves to ID trees as he jogs - A1 according to him.

Bark is the only feature I can access on many tall forest trees (even in summer, where distance and canopy overlap make even binoculars and fallen nut observations less than entirely helpful). The schematic feature sketches and diagrams in key of this book ("decision tree" for identification) combine with very well produced young-mature-old (plus variations) photos under each tree's dedicated page-spread. Tom Wessel's seal of approval (Wojtech is his former student) gives me great confidence that this is meticulously accurate -- at least for the NewEngland (plus east-upstate NY) area covered. Clearly, too, the book is intended not just to help readers identify tree species by name, but to appreciate what the bark of trees can show us about their history and ecological relations.

Finally, a book that pays attention to bark! Most guides talk about leaves, fruit, flowers, fruits, buds and twigs. On most trees, leaves aren't available in the winter. Flowers are only available for a few weeks in the spring. Fruit are available mostly in the fall. Buds are only available half the year or so. All five of them are often up too high to reach even when it is the right season. I can often recognize a tree by its bark, but telling someone else how I knew was impossible - I just didn't have the vocabulary! And I couldn't figure out how to describe a bark I saw to remember it when I didn't have a guide with me. The use of the quarter for size basis is wonderful - I hate descriptions that are in centimeters or fractions of an inch! The photos are amazing. Anyone who has tried to photograph something like bark will know how the light has to be just right. Too dim, no detail. Too bright, too many shadows and washed out color. I don't know how he did it! It is definitely useful as a field guide - good descriptions, keys, but with interesting reading to boot. A great book that I am so pleased to have in my library.

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