

# Become a Tree Detective!



So many children are taught that all the leaves fall off the trees in fall. But let's celebrate a tree that always stays green...the Evergreen!

Begin your detective work by borrowing a tree identification book from your local library. Next, create a folder or small detective notebook for the tree. Then go on a hunt in your yard, neighborhood, or local park to find a tree that is green during the winter and begin your investigation.



Observe the shape or silhouette of the tree - is it round, oval, large or small?



Draw a picture of the tree in your notebook.



Take a bark rubbing from the tree and add it to your evidence file.



Notice the different colors and textures of the bark.



Gather "clues" from the tree and store them in a bag. These could be leaves, twigs, and seeds that may have dropped on the ground (never pull anything off of a tree).



Don't forget to BREATHE! A good detective uses all five senses, including her nose.



Notice any wildlife that might make this tree a home. It can provide shelter for the bird and other animals when the other trees are bare.

Gather all your evidence and head back home. Discuss the difference between the Evergreen's "leaves" and others normally found in fall. Why are they so different in shape? Use your tree identification book to find out the name of your tree, and do some investigating together to discover the answer.

**Follow-up activities:** Use the "leaves" or needles from your tree as a brush and do some painting. Use your **bark rubbings** to make a collage. If you discovered a pinecone along the way, you can **roll it in peanut butter and then some birdseed**, hang it from a tree for the birds to enjoy. Visit a Christmas Tree farm and learn the difference between the many different types of Conifers.

**Parents:** You are on a hunt for a *Conifer*. Unlike *Deciduous* trees that lose their foliage in the fall, a Conifer keeps its leaves, or needles year round. Most of the trees in the Rainforest are Evergreens, they keep their leaves year round as well. This investigation is a great way to expand your child's vocabulary with a focus on the five senses. **Encourage your child to describe what he is seeing, touching, and smelling.**