

## **Hi and welcome to Fun Tree ID!**

I'm a Park Naturalist for Finger Lakes State Park.

**Goal:** My goal this afternoon is to help you learn simple tricks to identify up to 18 common forest trees found in the gorges of the Finger Lakes.

**Theme:** Identifying trees can be easy if you know what to look for.

*What are the features we look for when we are trying to identify trees?*

By their leaves

Bark

Fruit (or nuts)

Buds & twigs

Flowers

It is helpful to be able to identify trees by more than just the leaves or just the acorns.

*Can anyone tell me why this would be a good idea?*

Fruit not always on the tree (nor leaves, for that matter)

Sometimes the tree is too small or immature to know by the bark

Often leaves, twigs and buds are up too high to see

Go up to an Ash (compound leaved tree) and ask someone to pluck off one "leaf". Then explain leaf vs. leaflet. Need to know a compound leaf from a simple leaf to understand leaf arrangement.

### **Two main concepts that I want visitors to learn:**

- 1) How to find a "leaf" vs. a "leaflet" – understand that the leaf is attached to the branch & in fall, the leaves fall and the branches stay on the tree.
- 2) Understand "alternate" vs. "opposite" leaf attachment.

### **Cover basic leaf terminology**

Kind or Type: broad leaf, needle-like or scale-like

Form: simple (single leaf) or compound (multiple leaflets)

Arrangement (on branch) opposite or alternate

MAD, Cap, Horse are opposite – everything else is alternate.  
(if you ever get confused, just check a maple tree)

### **Introduce dichotomous key**

Key out something simple using "Know Your Trees" - Ash?

Ash and hickory leaves look very similar. Just knowing "MAD, Cap, Horse" eliminates any confusion between the two.

Everyone probably knows what maple and oak leaves look like, so they're not on our list. What does a maple leaf look like? Canadian flag (pg 72). How about an oak? Lobed, has acorns (pg 55).

*Why learn tree ID?*

Nice to know the world we live in.

Impress your friends.

Fun!

**OK, so let's go have some fun!**