Turkey Creek
Dichotomous Key for Leaves

There are many other tree and shrub species at Turkey Creek. Can you find a species that is not on this sheet? Many other species can fall under these categories. This key is not an exhaustive key for all species and exists only for the purpose of this activity.

Directions:
Begin by selecting a leaf from the tree you want to identify. Observe its distinctive characteristics. Then, answer the first question. Given the answer, follow the arrow to the next question. Continue this until you have reached a tree.

Boxelder
(Acer negundo)

START HERE

Are the leaves simple or compound?

Simple

Are the leaves opposite or alternate?

Alternate

Are the leaves lobed or unlobed?

Lobed

Are the lobes bristle-tipped or round-toothed?

Bristle

Sugar Maple
(Acer saccharum)

Opposite

Round

Bur Oak
(Quercus macrocarpa)

Unlobed

Are the edges of the leaf coarsely or finely toothed?

Coarse

Finely toothed

Basswood
(Tilia americana)

Heart-shaped

Asymmetrical

Are the leaves smooth or rough to the touch?

Rough

Slippery Elm
(Ulmus rubra)

Simple leaf

Compound leaf

Smooth

Hackberry
(Celtis occidentalis)

Finally toothed

Coarsely toothed

Round toothed

Bristle-tipped

Jagged or serrated edge

Black Cherry
(Prunus serotina)

Fine
Turkey Creek Nature Preserve

A to B and back
distance=1.1 miles

Trails

- Turkey Creek

Parking

A

B

B

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

prairie loop
.30 miles

prairie loop
.35 miles