

Kansas Trees are Terrific in All Shapes and Sizes

2025-2026 Kansas Arbor
Day Poster Contest



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Important dates to remember

School poster contest winner due to Community District Foresters	(February 6 th , 2026)
Posters due to State office for state winner to be decided	(February, 27 th , 2026)
State winner decided and announced	(March 6 th , 2026)
Prizes delivered to state and district winners	Before Arbor Day
Arbor Day Celebration at the Capital	(April 24 th , 2026)

Possible Prizes

Students- Framed poster, tree planting, Kansas Arbor Day Poster Contest T-Shirt, tree seedlings, opportunity to participate in state Arbor Day Celebration and more!

Teachers- Kansas Arbor Day Poster Contest logo items, classroom resources, and more!

Schools- Framed collage poster, tree for school, and more!

Welcome

Dear Fifth Grade Educator,

You are invited to join other fifth grade teachers across Kansas in the 2025-2026 Kansas Arbor Day Poster Contest. This year's contest, "**Kansas Trees are Terrific in All Shapes and Sizes,**" is designed to increase knowledge on the different species of trees we have in Kansas and promote each trees strengths and weaknesses in the landscape.

Kansas is traditionally defined as a prairie state, however there are actually 5.2 million acres of forests, woodlands, and trees in Kansas that account for 10% of the state's total land area. These community, rural and agroforests provide shelter and food for wildlife, absorb air pollutants and carbon dioxide, protect water quality and quantity, prevent soil erosion and make our Kansas communities more enjoyable and livable, to name a few of their many benefits to us.

Participation in the curriculum and poster contest will increase student awareness of the important role trees play in the quality of life and environmental health of our Kansas landscape and the promotion of tree species diversity. Having a different species in trees provide many benefits, all of these benefit are outlined in the curriculum.

The use of part or all the activities in this lesson plan is encouraged but not mandatory for participation in the state contest. You may adapt, alter, or supplement these activities to meet the needs of your classroom but only posters drawn by **5th grade students** are eligible for competition.

Posters should strictly follow the contest rules on page 22. Remember to not laminate, mat, mount, frame or fold posters. Only one local-winning poster should be submitted to district competition from a school or from a local contest supported by a Tree City USA community. On the back of the local-winning poster, please attach a completed School Winner Report Form (page 23). If you are not partnering with your local tree board or forestry staff (see below for Tree City USA communities) be sure to reach out to them. **Local-winning posters are due to the office of your KFS Community Forester (page 25) by February 6, 2025.**

I encourage you to join the Kansas Forest Service and our contest partners, in teaching the youth of our state that ***Kansas Trees are Terrific*** for all that we gain when there are thriving forest habitats around us! Participation in the contest could result in prizes for the district winning student and teacher and the overall state winner.



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kansasforests.org

Sustaining and enhancing natural resources and communities through forestry and wildland fire management.

To find out if your city is a Tree City USA community, visit the Kansas Forest Service website – [Tree City USA | Community Forestry | Kansas Forest Service | Kansas State University](#).



Step 1

BASIC ACTIVITY

Design a healthy, diverse community forest

Classroom Activity:

- Students will design a diverse community forest landscape plan

Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of specific trees' growth characteristics, landscape functions and planting site requirements by designing a diverse community forest landscape plan

Time Recommended:

- 60-90 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Photocopied worksheets on pages 10-16
- Scissors
- Glue or glue sticks
- Ruler
- Pencils and paper

National Education Standards Correlation:

National Science Education Standards Correlation:

- Design a solution or product in light of the information at hand
- Understand diversity and adaptation of organisms

National Geography Education Standards Correlation:

- Understand characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on Earth's surface

National Social Studies Education Standards Correlation with People, Places, and Environments:

- Estimate distance, calculate scale, and distinguish other geographic relationships such as population density and spatial distribution patterns
- Examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes
- Propose, compare, and evaluate alternative uses of land and resources in communities and regions

Instructional Sequence:

Assess your students' prior knowledge and awareness of trees by asking how many different kinds of trees each student sees on their way to school. Record the responses, without comment, on the board. Ask students how they can tell different trees apart. Responses will vary. Some leading questions to ask could include:

Does the tree have special fruits or seeds?

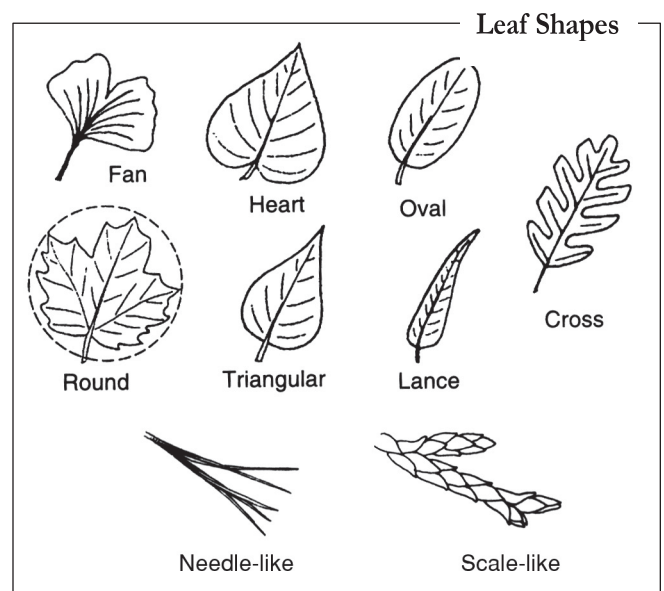
Does the tree have a unique shape?

Are the leaves broad and flat or are they needle-like?

Does the tree stay green all year round or does it lose its leaves?

What does the bark look like? (color, texture, thickness)

If students are unfamiliar with trees, or if time allows, go outside to observe trees together as a class. Take the Tree Clue Sheet (page 10) to use as a guide. Look for leaves and seeds, both on the trees and on the ground. Ask students to point out leaf patterns and shapes. Have students feel the bark on several different trees and then describe the texture and the color. Encourage students to mimic the shape of the tree with their bodies. Return to the classroom.



Concept #1: Without a diversity (Variety) of trees, one disease or insect could destroy all the trees in an area.

Concept #2: Trees come in different shapes and sizes.

Concept #3: Some trees need certain locations, temperatures and soils to survive.

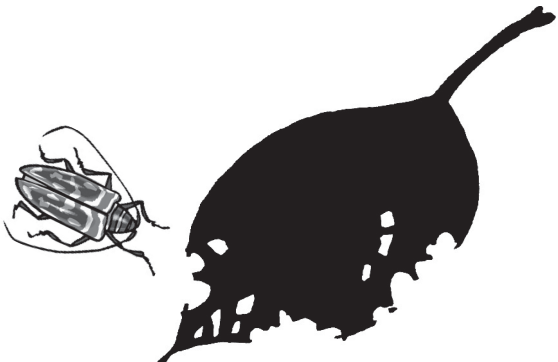
Concept #4: A greater diversity of trees means a greater diversity of wildlife.

Concept #5: Tree diversity provides beauty and interesting variety.

Hand out copies of the Vocabulary Sheet/Rubric and the Tree Information Sheets (pages 10-13) to each student.

Tell students that they are going to create a community forest landscape plan by selecting appropriate trees to “plant” in designated locations. Explain that knowing how to properly plant a tree is important, but planting the right tree in the right place is essential if you wish to enjoy that tree for years to come. In selecting a tree for a specific location there are several important things to consider.

Write the following five concepts on the board as you discuss them (see above). Include some of the background information in the discussion. Bolded words are defined on the Vocabulary Sheet, but if students are unfamiliar with any of the terms, define them as you progress through the concepts.



Concept 1: Without a diversity (variety) of trees, one disease or insect could destroy all the trees in an area.

Background: Explain that insect pests and diseases can affect almost any tree but usually these are not life-threatening to the tree. For example, tiny insects cause bumpy, wart-like **galls** to develop on hackberry leaves. While these galls do not kill the tree, some people think the galls make the tree less attractive. But occasionally a disease or pest will appear and almost completely destroy a particular tree **species**.

One example of a tree that is being targeted by a pest is our Ash trees. Ash trees around the USA are dying due to an insect called Emerald Ash Borer, commonly referred as EAB.

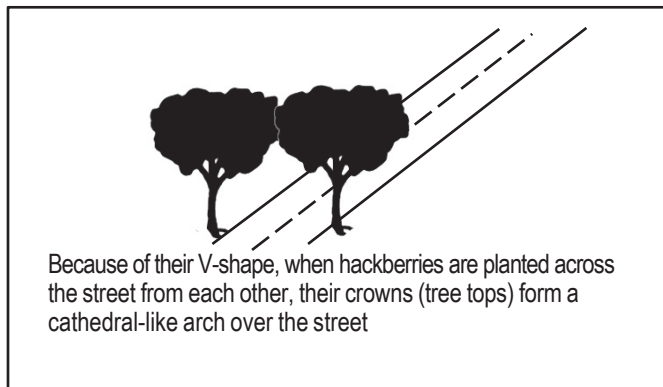
Another instance is, the American elm was once the most commonly planted **street tree** in North America in 1930. A fungus called Dutch Elm Disease (DED) found its way to the United States and spread across the nation, killing millions of elm trees and leaving many cities almost treeless. Now, there are cultivars (versions) of the American Elm that are resistant to DED, which has led to a resurgence of living American Elms.

Planting a **diversity** of trees prevents one disease or pest from destroying all the trees in a community.

Step 1: Discover the importance of tree diversity in a community -- BASIC ACTIVITY

Concept #2: Trees come in different shapes and sizes.

Background: If given enough space to grow, trees have characteristic **shapes**. Some shapes fit better in a space and serve different functions than others. For example, a tree with a rounded **crown** (tree's leafy top) will shade your backyard



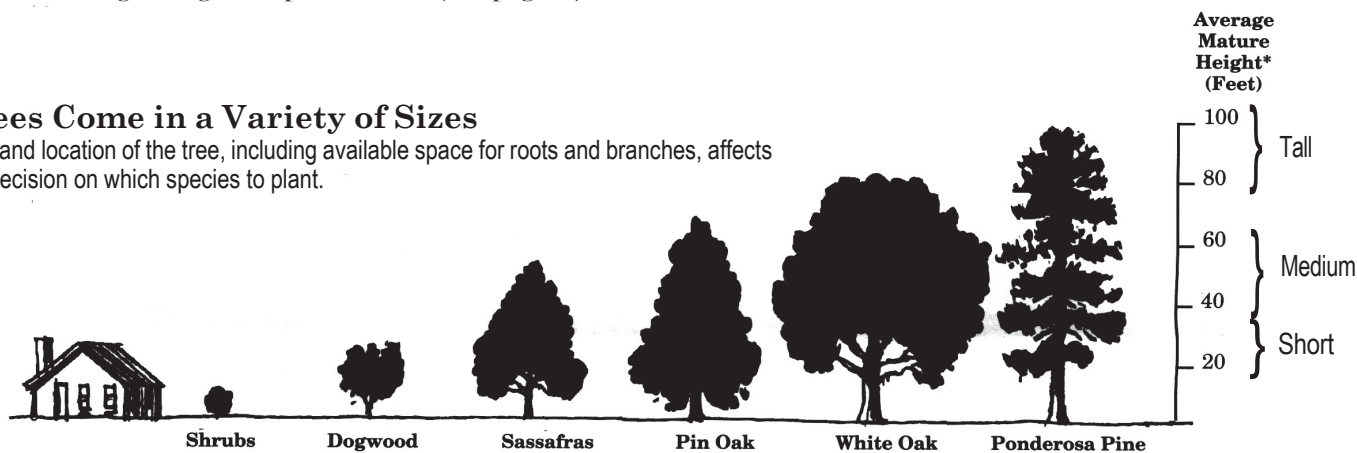
Pyramidal-shaped trees, especially **evergreens** that are wider at the bottom than at the top, provide less shade but are better at breaking the wind nearer the ground. The pyramidal-shaped tree that takes up more space near the ground means less lawn to mow, but also less space to play.

Ask students to look at the "Key to Tree Shapes" on the bottom of their Tree Information Sheet. Have them identify the shapes of the trees listed.

Size is also important in tree selection. Knowledge of whether a two-foot seedling will grow into a 30' high tree with a 20' **spread** (width) or a 100' tree with a 70' spread is critical in deciding where to plant a particular tree. Trees too large for a particular site can quickly crowd a house, block a view, or get tangled in power lines. (See page 7.)

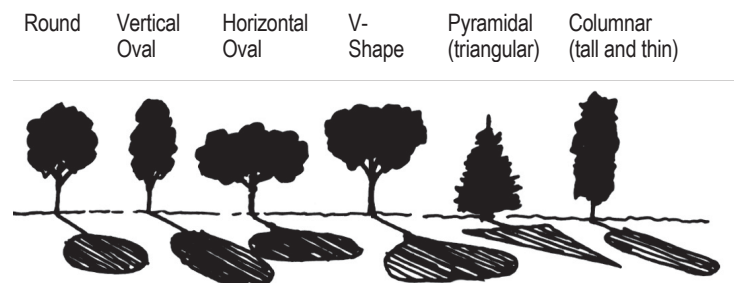
Trees Come in a Variety of Sizes

Size and location of the tree, including available space for roots and branches, affects the decision on which species to plant.



Trees Come in a Variety of Shapes

Crown Form or Shape varies among species, including round, oval, columnar, V-shaped or pyramidal shapes. Consider how the shape of the tree works in the space available.



Ask students to identify which trees on the Tree Information Sheet will grow to be the largest ...the smallest?

The tree's purpose will impact the suitability of different tree species, whether used for shade, aesthetic beauty, wind protection, screening, or other purposes.

Teacher's Tip!

If time permits, have your students draw and cut out the different tree shapes. Go outside. Have students hold the different shapes in front of the sun and look at the different shadows they cast. Have students make the tree shapes with their bodies. Sketch each tree shape and its shadow!

Concept #3: Some trees need certain locations, temperatures and soils to survive.

Background: Discuss with students that it is important not only to determine if the tree fits the location, but if the location provides what the tree needs to survive. Do the environmental factors of the location provide conditions that the tree needs to grow?

Ask students to think about what some of these environmental conditions could be.

Environmental factors include:

- **Temperature:** The average lowest temperature of the year limits the growing range of many trees. Some trees grow best in cool climates; some do best in warm climates; while some trees can tolerate a wide range of temperatures.

Want to learn more? At www.arborday.org/zones the National Arbor Day Foundation has a hardiness zone map with the country divided into regions based on temperature. Using this map, you can determine if a particular tree will survive the climate where you live.

- **Soil and Moisture:** Each tree species can tolerate wet or dry growing conditions to a different degree. Some species do better in sandy soils, some grow

better in rocky or clay-like soils. The soil in parking lots often contains a great deal of salt from winter de-icing. The salt can affect growing conditions for many kinds of trees. Honeylocust is a tree that is very tolerant of many soil conditions, as well as salt.

Have students refer to the “Key to Ideal Site Conditions” at the bottom of the Tree Information Sheet and identify a tree that requires a wet soil to grow...one that is tolerant of many different soil conditions.

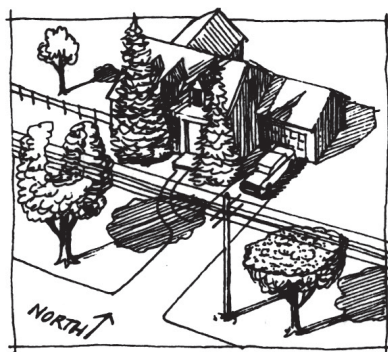
- **Light:** Another important environmental factor to consider is the amount of light the tree needs to grow. Some tree species, like Ginkgo and most pines, require full sunlight to grow. Other tree species are more shade tolerant. Do not make the mistake of planting a tree where it is mismatched with its need for light.

Ask students to look at the “Key to Ideal Site Conditions” at the bottom of the Tree Information Sheet. Ask students to identify a tree that needs full sun ...one that is shade tolerant.

- Other environmental factors include other weather conditions like high **winds**, **soil compaction**, and **air pollution** (some species are very sensitive to chemicals in the air).

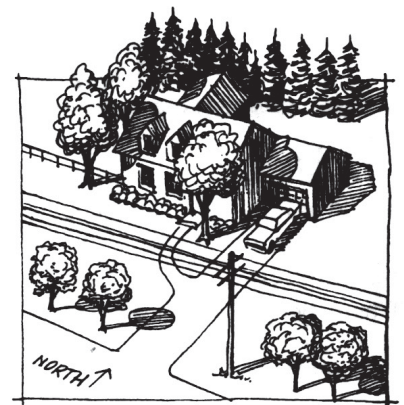
Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Wrong Trees, Wrong Places



- Large trees planted under utility lines can interfere with lines
- Evergreens planted too close to the house can block warming winter sunlight and restrict views
- Avoid planting shade trees near a garden
- Be careful not to plant a large tree near a chimney

Better Choices



- Short flowering trees don't grow up into over head lines
- Large deciduous trees on the southeast, southwest, and west provide cooling shade in summer and don't block the low winter sun helping warm your home
- An evergreen windbreak on the north blocks cold winter winds and provides a home for wildlife

Step 1: Discover the importance of tree diversity in a community - BASIC ACTIVITY

Concept #4: A greater diversity of trees means a greater diversity of wildlife.

Background: Trees play an important role in the web of life that exists in a rural or urban forest. They provide food and shelter to many kinds of animals. Certain tree species can determine the insect, bird, and even some **mammal** populations that exist in the area. Without that tree the dependent animal would not be present.

Proper selection of trees and plants can provide beauty and shade and, at the same time, provide a haven for wildlife. The presence of wildlife can make a backyard, schoolyard, or park a special place for you and your family. As urban and suburban development displaces many birds and animals from their natural habitat, it becomes increasingly important for people to provide mini-sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife. When selecting trees to plant that benefit wildlife be sure to select trees that provide for their needs.

Trees that provide food: A diversity of trees with high food value for wildlife is the single best way to bring wildlife close by. Students should be reminded that when selecting trees to plant for wildlife they should consider a wide variety of trees so there will be food for the animals year round. Some tree species produce seeds in the spring, other species produce their seeds and fruits in the summer or fall. Some trees keep fruit on the branches into the winter. Select species that produce high food value seeds, berries, nuts and acorns.



Trees that provide cover and shelter: Birds and small animals need concealed places for nesting and hiding, protected from the eyes of predators. Planting **conifers (evergreens)** in groups, growing hedges with low branches, and using prickly or thorny plants in a few areas are all ways to provide wildlife cover and habitat.

Using their Tree Information Sheets, have students identify some of the tree species that are most beneficial to wildlife.

Ask students what kinds of wildlife they would like to attract.

What are some of the benefits and disadvantages of attracting wildlife?

An example could include the fun of bringing many species of birds to your backyard versus problems with attracting large numbers of birds to city streets, where bird droppings get on parked cars and business signs.

Concept #5: Tree diversity provides beauty and interesting variety.

Background: Trees provide beauty and add value to a landscape. Trees simply make our lives more pleasant.

Ask students to describe the benefits we get from trees. Record the responses on the board. If not mentioned by the students, include the benefits listed below.

Trees line our streets, cool our air, trap dust, muffle noise, shield us from wind, shade our parks, screen unattractive sites, and bring wildlife to our backyard. Trees also provide social benefits. Hospital patients have been shown to recover from surgery more quickly when their room has a view of trees.

Some tree species have showy spring flowers; others have spectacular fall color. Certain trees have tasty fruit while others have fragrant needles or leaves. Planting different kinds of trees enhances the community landscape throughout the year.

Have the students once again refer to the Tree Information Worksheet. Have them look at the diversity among the leaf shapes and the fruit produced by different trees. Ask them to describe the shapes of the various leaves. Ask students to think about what tree, or trees, they would most like to play under... or view from a window... and why.



THE ACTIVITY:

Design a healthy, diverse community forest

Provide the opportunity for students to apply information learned by designing a community forest landscape plan.

Pass out the Tree Selection Sheet and the Community Landscape Plan Worksheets (page 16-18). Using data from the Tree Information Sheets and recalling the previously discussed concepts, students are to determine what tree to plant in each lettered location. Students should cut the selected trees from the Tree Selection Sheet and glue them at the tree planting site they have chosen. Remind students that many different trees might work in some of the sites - but just select one tree for each site.

Some trees are suitable for several locations. Some trees, like the Ponderosa Pine, should not be planted because of the problems it has with disease.

When the landscaping projects are complete, ask students to explain their planting plans and their choice of tree locations.

Provide the opportunity for peer review and redesign.

ANSWER KEY

Site A: #5, #8, #9, #10, #12, #16

Site B: #1, #2, #4, #6, #7, #11, #15

Site C: #3, #13

Site D: #1, #5, #10, #16

Site E: #12 is best,

#4, #7, #8, #9, #12, #15 are acceptable

Site F: #1, #5, #10, #16

Site G: #6, #9 are best;

#6, #8, #10 is acceptable

Site H: #2 is best;

#1, #3, #5, #16 are acceptable

Site I: #8, #9, #12

Site J: #3, #9, #16

Assessments:

Assessment Rubric:

Hand out a copy of the rubric (page 11) or put the rubric on the board at the start of the activity so students clearly understand the measured objectives.

Alternative Assessment:

Ask students to look at tree plantings around the school building. Determine if these trees were good choices for the sites in which they were planted.

Activity Adaptations:

You can adapt this Basic Activity for students with special needs by asking those students to draw an enlarged picture of the park site (site G) and select one or more trees from Tree Information Sheets A & B to “plant” in the park. They can choose to cut and paste trees from the Tree Selection Sheet OR they may draw and color in their own trees by looking at the illustrations on the Information Sheets. Students should label the trees in their picture and be able to describe why they picked the trees they did during the class discussion.

Extension Activities:

Many of the trees used in the Basic Activity are tree species commonly planted across much of the United States. However not all may be tree species that are well suited to your local environment. It is important for students to recognize some trees common to their own region. Two extension activities are available for you to extend your students’ interest and learning.

- **Tree Selection Game** is found on pages 17-29. It can be used as a follow-up to **Create a Classroom Forest**, (below) or used as a fun way to reinforce concepts introduced in the Basic Activity.

- **Create a Classroom Forest** is an activity designed to introduce the basics of classification and help familiarize students with trees common to their region. Students first head outside to observe the diversity of trees in their own community. Then they select a local tree species to research, compiling what they have learned into a class Tree Information Worksheet (similar to the one used in the Basic Activity). Finally, using measuring skills and a representative scale, students design a proportional forest in the classroom that reflects the tree diversity in their community. You can find this activity on the Foundation’s Web site at arborday.org/classroomforest.

Tree Clue Sheet

Use this page to gather clues about a specific tree. Look closely before checking your responses. The tree will be either conifer OR broadleaf. Check only one set of responses.



☐ **Conifer:**
(cone-bearing)



Broadleaf:
(Deciduous)

Leaves (Conifer)



☐ **NEEDLE**

SHAPE:

☐ round
☐ flat

☐ triangular
☐ square



☐ **SCALE**

NUMBER IN BUNCHES:

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 or more

TEXTURE:

☐ stiff

☐ limber

☐ sharp tip

☐ blunt tip

LENGTH: ☐ inches long

Leaves (Broadleaf)

ATTACHMENT:

☐ **Simple** (single-blade)



☐ **Compound** (more than 1 blade)



☐ palmate (like a hand)

☐ pinnate (like a feather)

☐ bipinnate (2 x like a feather)

ARRANGEMENT:

☐ Opposite



☐ Alternate



LEAF MARGINS:



☐ lobed



☐ entire



☐ toothed

LEAF SHAPE:

☐ triangular

☐ fan shaped

☐ lance shaped

☐ egg shaped

☐ heart shaped

☐ cross shaped

☐ mitten shaped

☐ 5-pointed star

☐ round

☐ pear shaped

Tree Shape



☐ **Columnar**
(tall and thin)



☐ **Pyramidal**
(triangular)



☐ **V-Shaped**



☐ **Round**



☐ **Vertical Oval**



☐ **Horizontal Oval**

Branching Patterns

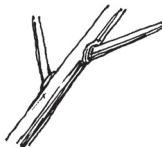
OPPOSITE

(branches across from each other at same level)



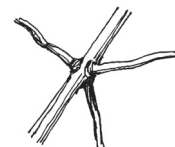
ALTERNATE

(branches on a different level)



WHORLED

(three branches at same level)



Seeds, Fruiting Bodies, Flowers

(Use the back of this sheet to describe or draw the flower or seed body, if it is present. Write down any special characteristics these have, including color, texture, and shape.)

Bark

COLOR:

☐ brown

☐ reddish

☐ grey

☐ white

☐ black

TEXTURE:

☐ smooth

☐ deep

☐ ridged

☐ shallow

PATTERN:

☐ diamond

☐ horizontal

☐ vertical

ATTACHMENT:

☐ tight

☐ loose

Vocabulary

- Broadleaf** – a tree with thin, flat leaves that produces flowers and fruit
- Capsule** – a sack or pod containing seeds
- Catkin** – a cluster of many tiny flowers on a stem or stalk
- Conifer** – a tree with needle-like or scale-like leaves that bears (grows) cones
- Crown** – the top or head of a tree
- Deciduous** – shedding all leaves each year
- Diversity** – differing from each other, a variety
- Evergreen** – holding on to leaves through the winter
- Gall** – a swelling on a plant often caused by insects
- Growth Rate** - how quickly a tree grows
- Hardy** – tough, able to stand poor or harsh conditions
- Hardiness Zone** – The range of soil and weather conditions in which a tree can successfully grow
- Ideal** - perfect
- Landscape Plan** - a planned drawing of plants in a particular area
- Mammal** – a warm-blooded animal, often with hair or fur, whose babies are born alive and fed with mother's milk. (Examples: raccoon, deer, squirrel, mouse, bear, human.)
- Species** - a kind or sort
- Spread** – the width of a tree's crown
- Street tree** – a tree planted near the street, often cared for by the city
- Windbreak** – a group of trees planted to act as a shelter from the wind



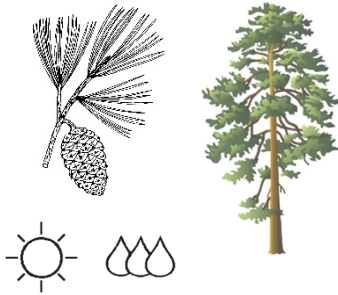
RUBRIC - Design a healthy, diverse community forest

0-2 POINTS POOR PLAN	3-5 POINTS AVERAGE PLAN	6-8 POINTS GOOD PLAN	9-10 POINTS EXCELLENT PLAN
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 6 trees are "planted" in sites on the Worksheet. <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 6 trees in your plan fit the described site needs. <input type="checkbox"/> You cannot clearly explain why trees were selected for sites A-J . <input type="checkbox"/> You do not participate in the class discussion of landscaping plans. <input type="checkbox"/> You make little effort to improve your landscape plan after discussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Your final landscape plan does not create a healthy, diverse community forest.	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 or 7 trees are "planted" in sites on the Worksheet. <input type="checkbox"/> 6 or 7 trees in your landscape plan fit the described sites needs. <input type="checkbox"/> You can explain why some trees were selected for at least 6 sites A-J . <input type="checkbox"/> You participate a little in class discussion of landscaping plans. <input type="checkbox"/> You make some effort to improve your landscape plan after class discussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Your plan is a start toward creating a healthy, diverse community forest.	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 or 9 trees are "planted" in sites on the Worksheet. <input type="checkbox"/> 8 or 9 trees in your landscape plan fit the described site needs. <input type="checkbox"/> You can explain clearly why each tree was selected for at least 8 sites A-J . <input type="checkbox"/> You participate actively in class discussion of landscaping plans. <input type="checkbox"/> If needed, you make good improvements in your landscape plan after class discussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Your plan results in a healthy, diverse community forest.	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 trees are "planted" in sites on the Worksheet. <input type="checkbox"/> All 10 trees in your landscape plan fit the described site needs. <input type="checkbox"/> You can very clearly explain why each tree was selected for each site A-J . <input type="checkbox"/> You actively participate in the class discussion of landscaping plans. <input type="checkbox"/> If needed, you make good improvements in your landscape plan after class discussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Your plan results in a very healthy, diverse community forest.

Tree Information Sheet — Side A

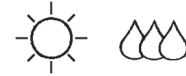
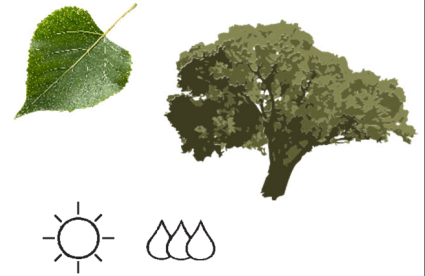
1 Ponderosa Pine

Height: tall (40-50 ft)
Spread: 20-25 ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: 3-6 in. long cone
Comments: Windbreak use, drought tolerant.
Wildlife Value: medium



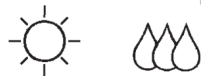
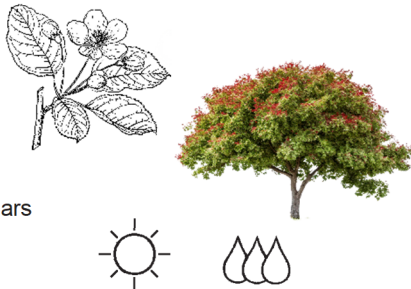
2 Cottonwood

Height: tall (70-100 ft)
Spread: 50-70 ft
Growth Rate: fast
Fruit: cotton-like seed
Comments: State Tree of Kansas
Wildlife Value: medium



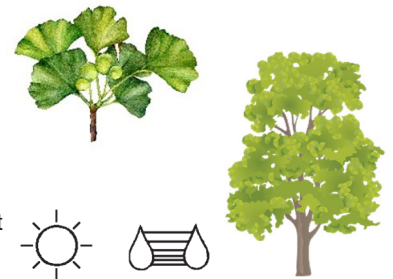
3 Crabapple

Height: Short (15-25ft)
Spread: 10-20ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: small berries
Comments: Differing cultivars provide differing-colored flowers
Wildlife Value: high



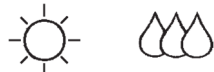
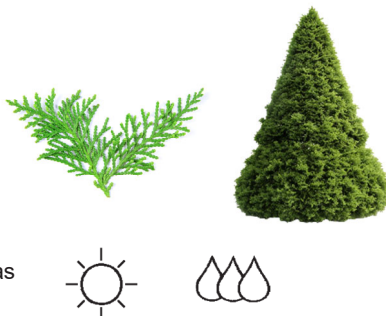
4 Ginkgo

Height: tall (50-60ft)
Spread: 25 to 40 ft growth
Rate: medium
Fruit: naked, smelly seed
Comments: yellow fall color. Because of smelly fruit, plant male trees.
Wildlife Value: low



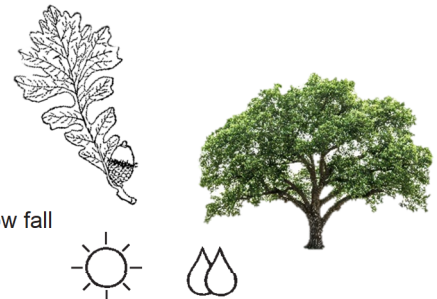
5 Arborvitae

Height: 30-55 ft
Spread: 10-20 ft
Growth Rate: medium-fast
Fruit: small cones
Comments: Green Giant cultivar is common in Kansas
Value to Wildlife: low



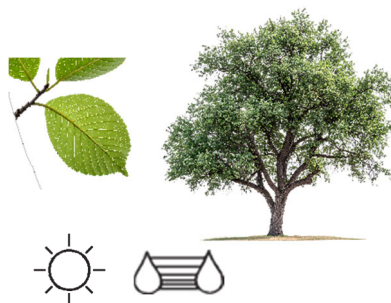
6 Bur Oak

Height: tall (50-80 ft)
Spread: 40-60 ft
Growth Rate: slow
Fruit: Large acorn
Comments: golden-yellow fall color.
Value to Wildlife: high



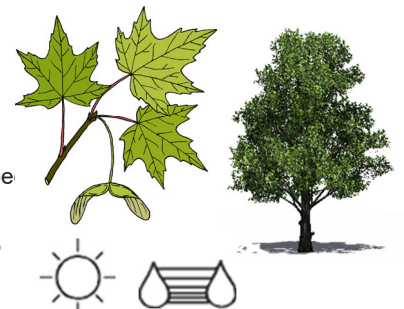
7 American Elm

Height: Large (60-80 ft)
Spread: 40-60 ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: winged seed
Comments: Many cultivars, providing differing colors
Value to Wildlife: low



8 Sugar Maple

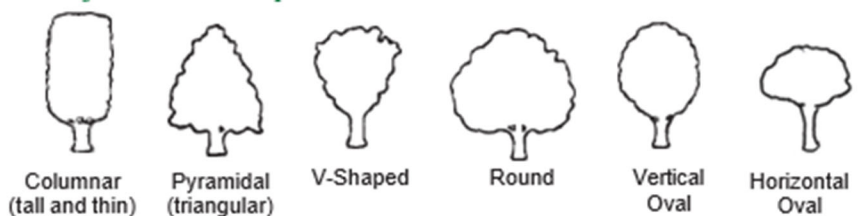
Height: medium (60-75 ft)
Spread: 40-50 ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: helicopter /wing-shape seed
Comments: Many cultivars, providing differing colors
Value to Wildlife: low



Key to Ideal Site Conditions:



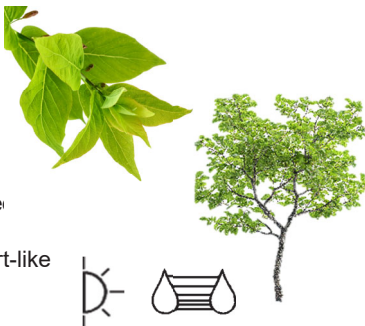
Key to Tree Shapes:



Tree Information Sheet — Side B

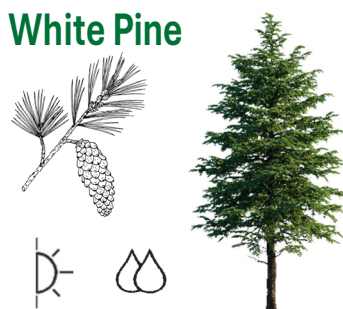
9 Hackberry

Height: medium (40-60ft)
Spread: 50 feet
Growth Rate: fast
Fruit: hard, berry-like seed
Comments: grows easily, leaves sometimes get wart-like galls.
Value to Wildlife: high



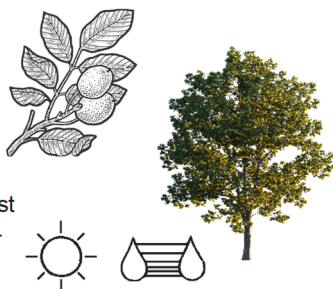
10 Southwestern White Pine

Height: medium (35-55ft)
Spread: 20-40ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: 2-8 in. pinecones
Comments
Value to Wildlife: medium



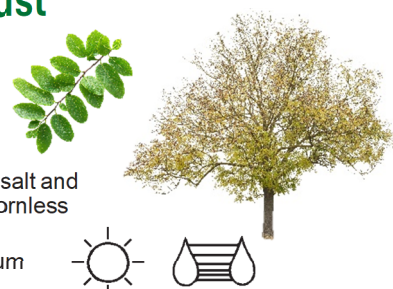
11 Black Walnut

Height: tall (50-75ft)
Spread: 50-75 ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: green bear nut
Comments: provides the most expensive lumber in Kansas.
Value to Wildlife: high



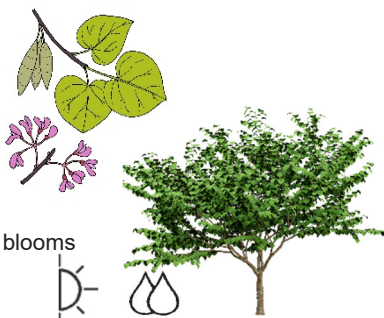
12 Honeylocust

Height: medium
Spread: 50 feet
Growth Rate: fast
Fruit: pod
Comments: tolerant of salt and most soils. Select a thornless variety for planting.
Value to Wildlife: medium



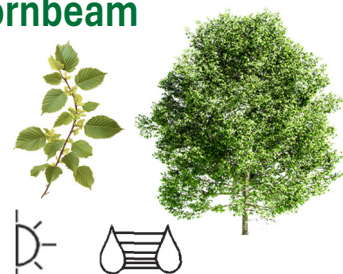
13 Redbud

Height: short (20-30ft)
Spread: 20 to 30 ft.
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: pod
Comments: has purple blooms in spring.
Value to Wildlife: low



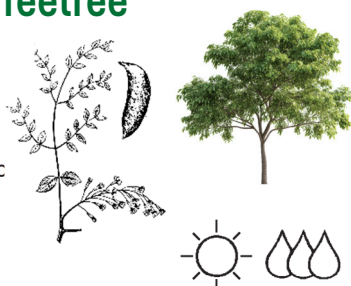
14 American Hornbeam

Height: small (20-30ft)
Spread: 15- 25 ft
Growth Rate: slow
Fruit: small nuts clustered together
Comments
Value to Wildlife: low



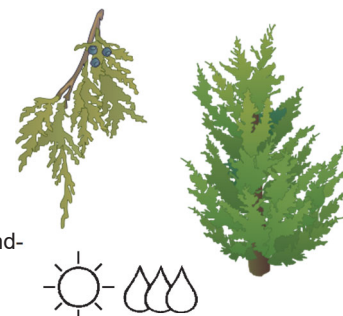
15 Kentucky Coffeetree

Height: tall (60-75ft)
Spread: 40-50ft
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: long leathery seed pod
Comments: tough species, great street tree
Value to Wildlife: low

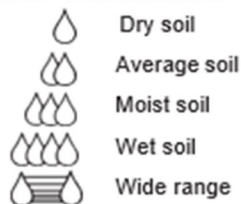
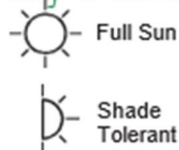


16 Redcedar

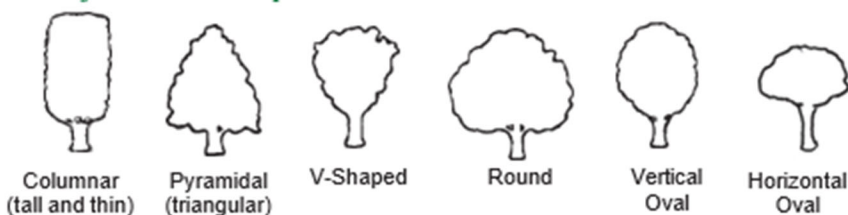
Height: medium (40-50ft)
Spread: 20 feet
Growth Rate: medium
Fruit: berry-like cone
Comments: excellent for wind-breaks; birds love berries.
Value to Wildlife: high



Key to Ideal Site Conditions:



Key to Tree Shapes:



Tree Selection Sheet

Assignment: Imagine you are helping a new community develop a landscape plan that will result in a healthy, diverse community forest. Look at the Community Landscape Plan Worksheet. Notice the holes that have already been dug at sites A-J for trees to be “planted.” Read through the list below and you’ll see that each site has different conditions and different tree needs. Using what you’ve learned, as well as referring to Tree Information Sheets A & B, select what you think is the best tree to “plant” in each site (Sites A-J) on the Community Landscape Plan Worksheet.

Cut out the trees you select and lightly tape or paste them in the site locations on the Worksheet. Be able to explain why you selected each tree and planted it where you did. (Several different trees may work in some sites – but just select one tree for each site.)

Site A — Needs a medium-sized tree that will grow well in a front yard.

Site B — Needs a tree tall enough to provide shade and leave room near the ground for children to play in a backyard.

Site C — Needs a street-side tree that will fit under a power line.

Site D — Needs an evergreen that holds its leaves year round.

Site E — Needs a tree that can tolerate poor soil and salt from winter de-icing in a parking lot.

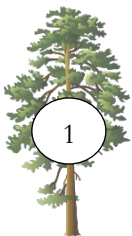
Site F — Needs a tree that can help break the wind just west of a farmhouse

Site G — Needs a medium or tall shade tree under which people can picnic and relax that will also benefit wildlife.

Site H — Needs a tree that will grow in wet soil near a wetlands area.

Site I — Needs a medium-sized tree that will grow in a variety of soil conditions

Site J — Needs a small-medium tree that will attract wildlife to a narrow space outside a class room window.



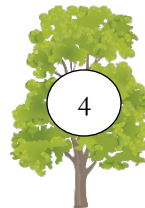
Ponderosa
Pine



Cottonwood



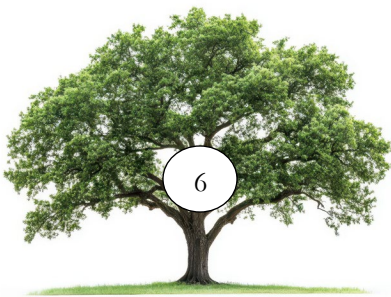
Crabapple



Ginkgo



Arborvitae



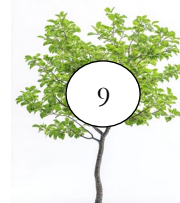
Bur oak



American Elm



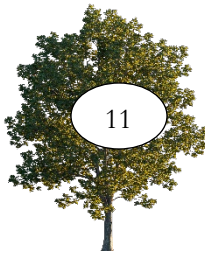
Sugar Maple



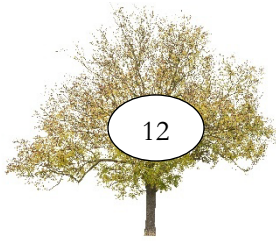
Hackberry



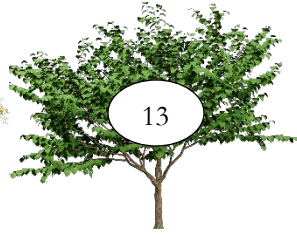
SW White
Pine



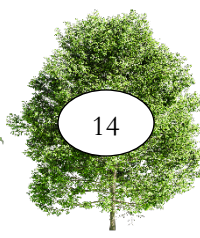
Black Walnut



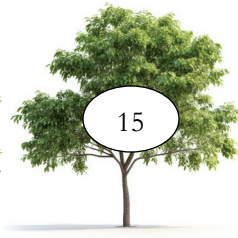
Honeylocust



Redbud



American
Hornbeam

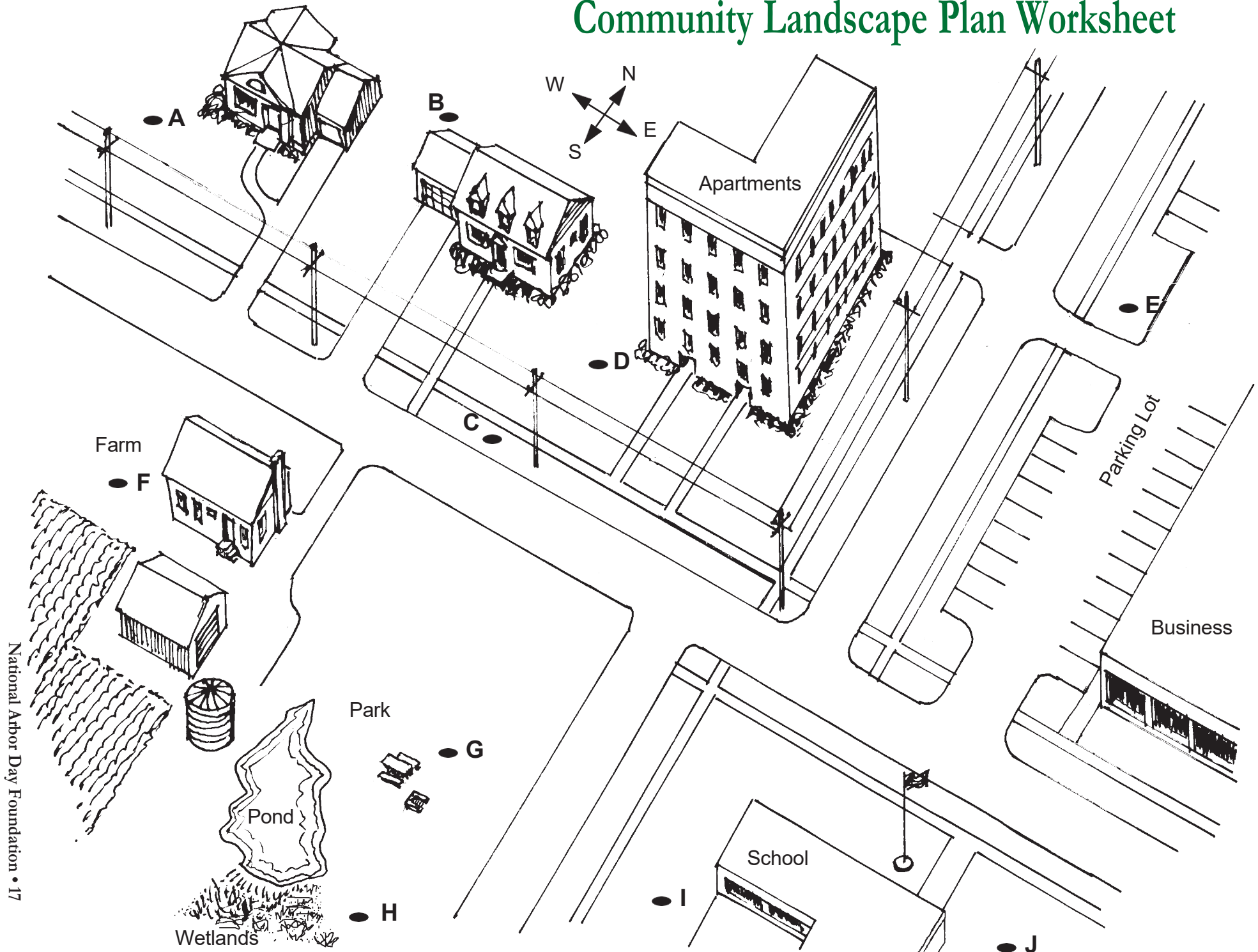


Kentucky
Coffeetree



Redcedar

Community Landscape Plan Worksheet



Step 1

EXTENSION ACTIVITY - Tree Selection Game

Objective:

- **Students will research trees common to their community and evaluate how some of their region's environmental conditions affect tree diversity in different tree planting situations.**

Time Recommended:

- **60 minutes**

Materials Needed:

- **Worksheet (page 19) • one copy per pair**
- **Scissors**
- **Glue**
- **Pencil & chart paper**
- **Assorted tree reference books and/or Internet access**
- **1 paper sack per pair of students**

National Science Education Standards Correlation:

- **Diversity and adaptations of organisms**

affect tree survival but these zones can help determine if a particular tree species is likely to survive the climate where you live. You may wish to refer to this map and share your area's hardiness zone with your students as they conduct their tree research.

Instructional Sequence:

Divide students into pairs. Provide a sheet of paper, one copy of the Tree Selection Game worksheet (page 19) and one paper sack per pair. Have each pair draw the name of one tree to research from the slips of paper prepared earlier. Using available resources, allow students 15 minutes to collect the following information about their assigned tree and write it on their chart paper. (See four topic areas below.)

1. **Tree function.** (Is it a shade tree, a windbreak tree, a hardy tree, or a tree planted for its beautiful blooms or leaf color?)
2. **Attraction to wildlife.** (What kinds of animals depend on this tree for food or shelter?)
3. **Size at maturity.** (What is the tree's expected height and spread? Small- under 30', Medium – 30 to 70', Tall – over 70')
4. **Soil conditions.** (What kind of soil & moisture conditions does the tree need?)

Post the completed tree information on the wall.

Instruct students to cut out the four Tree Selection Cards listed under the column "Tree Function." Have students put these cards in the paper bag and shake



Explore your community's trees with your students.

Advance Preparation:

Create a list of 15 trees common to your area. If you are unfamiliar with your region's trees, check with your local forester or visit

<https://www.kansasforests.org/resources/recommend-edtreesandshrubs.html> to find a listing of trees common to your region of Kansas.

If few trees species are common to your area, or if class time is limited, use the trees listed on the Tree Information Sheets (pages 12-13). Write the name of each tree on a separate slip of paper.

Background Information:

Helpful tree-related websites and books that your students can utilize are listed in the box on page 18. Some references that students use may list a hardiness zone range for different tree species. Visit arborday.org/zones to view the ArborDay.org Hardiness Zone Map which shows the country divided into regions based on temperature. Many factors

the bag. Students in each pair take turns pulling a card out of their bag, pasting down the cards in the Tree Function column of the Chart in the order they are drawn. Students can assign any Tree Function characteristic they wish to the Wild Card.

Repeat the process, column by column, for the three remaining groups. Again, students can assign any characteristic of that column to Wild Cards.

Once all pairs have their charts completed, explain that they are going to look at the information each team collected to see if they can find a tree that fits all the tree characteristics in each row.

For example, if the first row reads:

Tree Function	Attraction to Wildlife	Size at Maturity	Soil Conditions	Tree Selected
Provides shade	Attract birds	Medium size: 31 to 70 feet	Wild card	Hackberry

Students then try to find a medium sized tree that provides shade, attracts birds, and grows in whatever soil type the students selected to represent the Wild Card. Hackberry would fit all of these characteristics.

Allow students 15 minutes to study the posted tree information. Once students identify a tree that fits all the characteristics in the row, they should write the name of the selected tree in the space provided on the chart. When completed, each group should have four trees identified on their chart.

Note: It is possible that with some combinations you may not have a tree common to your area that fits the listed requirements.

Each pair should select one row of their Tree Selection Game Chart to read to the class. Other students in class can try to guess what tree was found that fits all the characteristics. Discuss what tree characteristics were found, or not found, in your community's trees and speculate why.

Alternative Assessment: Have students work in pairs to write a value statement about the importance of diversity in a community forest.

Tree Information Web Sites

National Arbor Day Foundation: www.arborday.org/trees/treeguide
 United States Forest Service: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/>
 University of Georgia collaboration: www.discoverlife.org/nh/
 National Wildlife Federation: <https://www.nwf.org/Trees-for-Wildlife>
 Center for Plant Conservation: www.centerforplantconservation.org/ASP/CPC_PlantLinks.asp#90
 Kansas Forest Service: <https://www.kansasforests.org/>

Tree Reference Books

Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs by George Petrides (Houghton Mifflin) 1972
National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees: Eastern Region and Western Region by Elbert Luther Little (Alfred Knopf) 2000
The Complete Trees of North America by Thomas Elias (Van Nostrand Reinhold) 1980
Trees of North America by C. Frank Brockman (Golden Press) 1986
Western Trees by George and Olivia Petrides (Houghton Mifflin) 1992
What Tree Is That? A Guide to the more common trees found in the Eastern/Central and Western United States (The National Arbor Day Foundation) 1999

Tree Selection Game

Tree Function	Attraction to Wildlife	Size at Maturity	Soil Conditions	Tree Selected

Tree Selection Cards

Tree Function	Attraction to Wildlife	Size at Maturity	Soil Conditions
Provides shade	Does not attract wildlife	Small size: 30 feet or less	Dry Soil
Provides shade	Attract birds	Medium size: 31 to 70 feet	Average or moist soil
Provides a privacy screen or creates a windbreak	Attracts many kinds of wildlife	Large size: Over 70 feet	Wet soils
Wild card	Wild card	Wild card	Wild card

Acknowledgements

Content

Adobe stock. *Media Library*. Found online at <https://stock.adobe.com/>

Arbor Day Foundation. Found online at <http://www.arborday.org>

Arbor Day Foundation. *The Value of Trees to a Community*. Found online at <http://www.arborday.org/trees/Benefits.cfm>

Arbor Day Foundation. *In all shapes and sizes*.

Arbor Day Foundation. *Tree Guide*. Found online at <https://arborday.org/tree-guide>

Kansas Forest Service. *Conservation Forestry Product List*. Found online at https://www.kansasforests.org/conservation_trees/products/index.html

UMCES. *Flora and Fauna media library*. Found at: <https://ian.umces.edu/media-library/>

The Kansas Forest Service would like to acknowledge that the lesson plan above was created by the National Arbor Day Foundation in 2006. Then was adapted with new information and to be better regionally specific for Kansas.

Step 2

Create a Poster

Kansas Trees are Terrific In All Shapes and Sizes

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Collect and analyze data about trees found in their communities
- Describe the pattern of forest cover and identify the factors that influence forests in Kansas.

Deadline: February 6th, 2025

Send local-winning posters to Kansas Forest Service District/ Community Foresters on page 25.

Kansas College and Career Ready Standards

SCIENCE STANDARDS: 5-PS3-1, 5-LS1-1, 5-LS2-1, 5-ESS3-1

DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS: LS1.C, LS2.A, LS2.B, ESS2.A and ESS3.C

KANSAS, HISTORY, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS:
Standard 1- Choices have consequences.

Contest Administration and Selection:



The Kansas Arbor Day Poster Contest is administered by the Kansas Forest Service. Local-winning posters are to be submitted to Kansas Forest Service Community Forestry District Foresters for competition at the district level. A state winner will be selected from the 4 district-winning entries. District winners and their teachers will receive gift packages sponsored by contest partners. The Kansas Winner will be recognized at the Tree City USA Recognition in the spring. A request is made each year for the State Winner to meet with the Governor and plant a tree on the Capitol grounds.

Create a Poster

Ask each student to create a poster that reflects their understanding of the benefits of trees in their community. Encourage students to think about the different types of trees that grow in your town and how they work for citizens and visitors alike.

Students should be able to use the knowledge they gained while doing the activities in this lesson to help determine which elements that they wish to represent in their poster. For example, have students think about how diverse trees can help their communities! After students have created their posters, have them present to the class or to a contest selection committee and discuss the process they used to decide which design elements to include in their poster and their rationale.

Students should make sure their poster follows the contest rules by using the numbered list on page 22. You may select the winner or have a judging panel for the classroom and school contest. Judges could include other students, garden club members, tree board members, nursery personnel, arborists, the city forester, teachers, PTA/PTO members or individuals with an interest in trees who are willing to volunteer some time.



Get the whole school involved by having the posters displayed in a common area and have students vote on the posters.

Poster Contest Rules

Follow the contest rules below to make certain all entries are eligible for competition. Entries not meeting these guidelines will be disqualified.

1. All entries must be original artwork created by a student who is currently in the **5th grade**. A student may enter the contest only once.
2. The student's first and last initial or name must be **written** or **signed** in the lower right-hand corner on the front of the poster.
3. a) Entries may be done in marker, crayon, paint pens, watercolor, ink, acrylic, colored pencil, and/or tempera paint.
b) Collages are not acceptable. (Do not glue anything to your poster).
c) Computer or photo generated art and/or printing is not acceptable. The use of light tables and other professional equipment is prohibited.
4. Entries must on 12x18 inch paper and HORIZONTAL display only.
5. Entries must be done on paper that will allow for duplication, display, and framing.
6. The poster must be related to the contest theme and content in some way. The theme "**Kansas Trees are Terrific in All Shapes and Sizes**" must be on the poster. All words must be spelled correctly.
7. Entries should not be matted, mounted, laminated, framed, or folded.
8. **Submit local-winning entries to a Kansas Forest Service Community Forester (page 25) by February 6, 2025.**
Deadlines for local contests should be earlier than February 6, 2024, to ensure timely arrival to a KFS forester office. We would recommend local contests end before winter break to ensure a timely arrival to KFS district foresters

School Winner Report Form

After selecting a school or local winner, copy and complete this form, attach to the back of the poster, and send to a Kansas Forest Service Community Forester by February 6, 2025 (page 25).

2026 School Winner Report Form

Send this form with the winning school or community poster to your KFS Community Forester. All information should be complete to expedite contact of winners.

Winner's Name _____

Winner's Home Address _____

City _____ Kansas Zip _____

Winner's parent(s) or guardian(s) name _____

Teacher's name _____

Teacher's email address _____

School name _____ Homeschool? Yes ____ No ____

School Address _____

City _____ Kansas Zip _____

School Phone (____) _____

Community/Local Partner Contact Information: _____

Important

Please indicate the number of posters entered in the **school** contest.

If contest sponsored by the community, please indicate the number of posters entered here.

Please indicate the number of teachers who participated in the curriculum.

If contest sponsored by the community, please indicate the number of schools that participated.

Please indicate the number of **Homeschool** posters entered in the contest.

If contest sponsored by the community, please indicate the number of teachers that participated.

All artwork

becomes the property of contest sponsors.

Step 3

Celebrate Arbor Day!

Kansas Arbor Day is April 24, 2026

The First Arbor Day was celebrated in Nebraska City, Nebraska in 1872. J. Sterling Morton proposed the idea to the State Board of Agriculture, who liked his idea and offered each county \$100 to the county that planted the most trees on that initial Arbor Day and \$25 worth of books to the individual who planted the most trees. The Arbor Day Foundation was formed in 1972, 100 years later when Nebraska wanted to commemorate the centennial of the tree planting holiday. A 9-member commission was appointed to get things started and \$10,000 was provided by legislature to support the effort. Since 1872, Arbor Day has been celebrated throughout the United States and Arbor Day celebrations in schools have always played an important role.

An Arbor Day celebration can be:

Simple: Plant a tree in honor of your school poster contest winner or to recognize an outstanding volunteer. Check to see if your city is a Tree City USA community and team up with a local tree board or city forestry department!

Inspiring: Have your graduating class plant a tree with younger students. This is a tradition that honors the students leaving and gives new students something to enjoy throughout their years!

Entertaining: Students could compose poems about trees, perform an Arbor Day play or do one or many of the 150 ways to celebrate trees on Arbor Day, found at the Arbor Day Foundation website - <https://bit.ly/3QBuJ4e>

Whatever you choose for your celebration – go outside and enjoy the trees and environment that surround you!



*Kentucky coffeetree in
Fairgrounds Park, Council Grove*

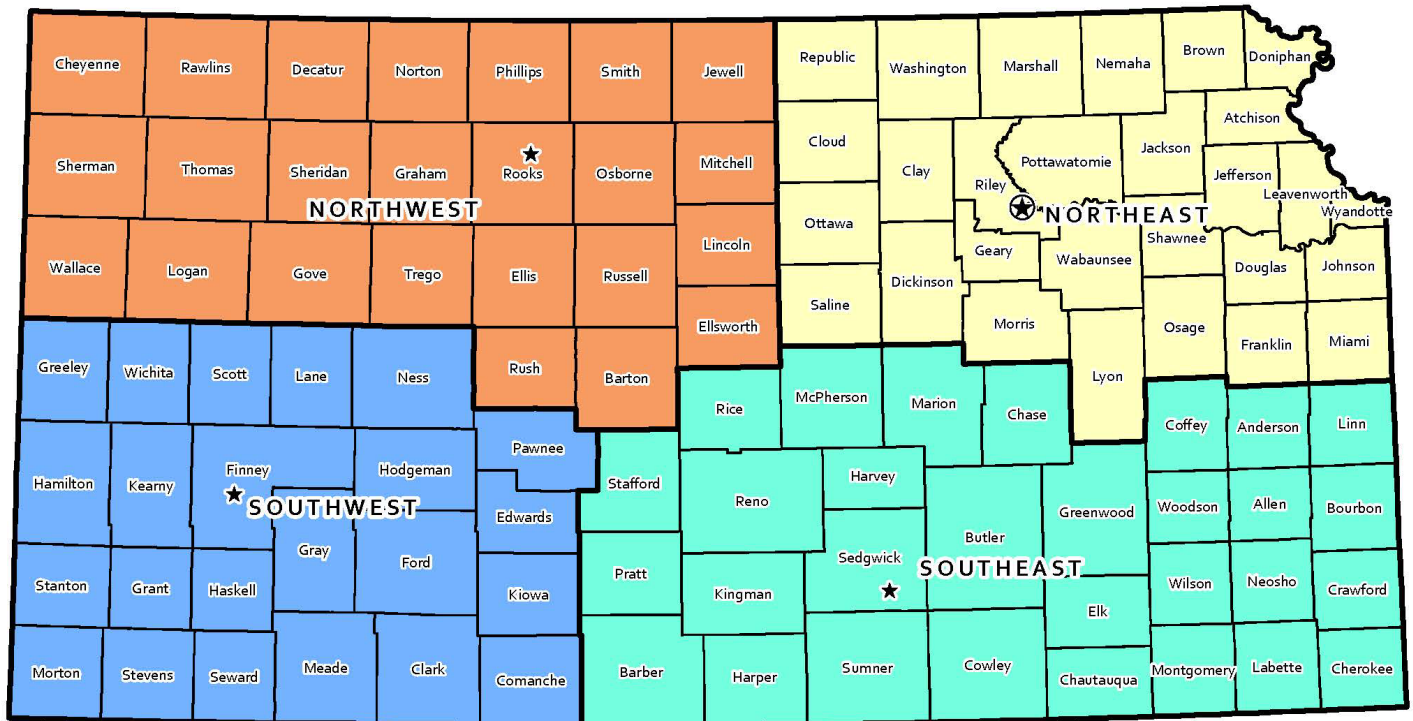


Bur oak in Shunga Park, Topeka



State Champion Ginkgo, Leavenworth

Kansas Forest Service Community Forestry Districts



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Updated: 1/13/2025

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Kody Kraemer- Southeast District- 785-410-6435- kody10@ksu.edu
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