



# EXPLORING SOUTHEASTERN NATIVE PLANTS

**BY: EMMA SMITH**



# NATIVE PLANTS

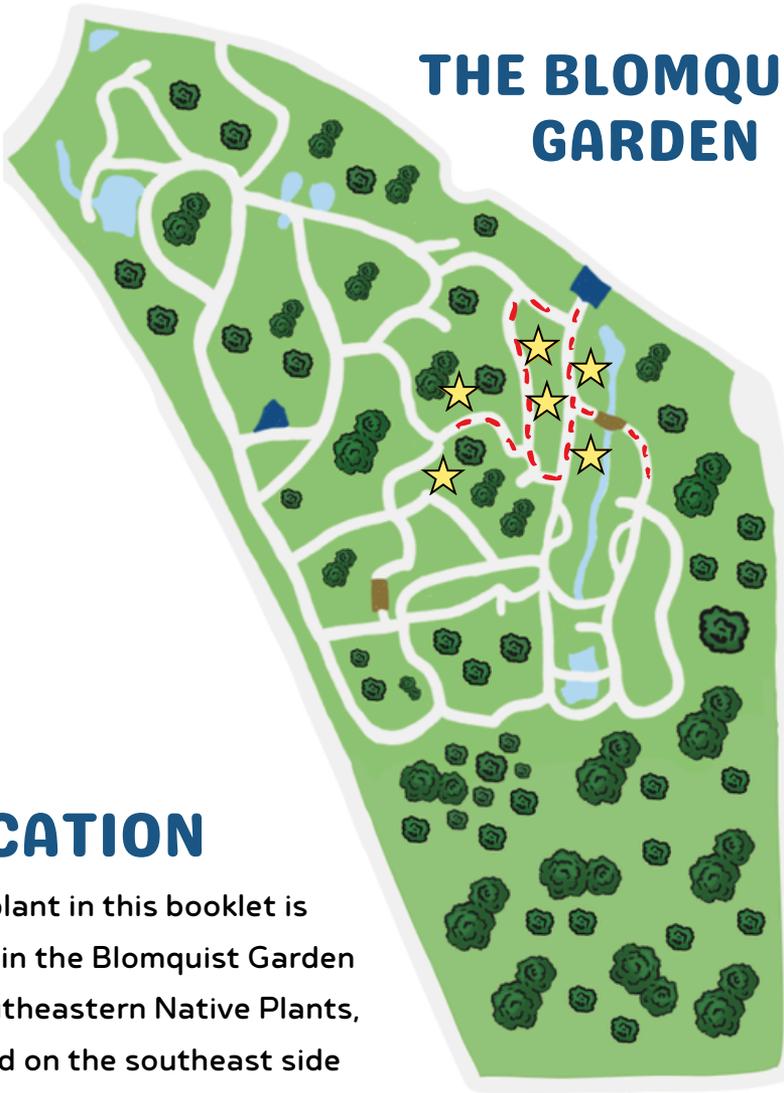
Indigenous communities believe that a native plant is a plant that has grown in a place for thousands of years, long before cities, roads, or gardens were built. These plants have always been part of the land, growing alongside animals, insects, and the people who have cared for them for generations. Indigenous communities have deep knowledge of these plants, using them for food, medicine, and traditions. When we protect native plants, we help take care of the land and all the life it supports!



## IF YOU DON'T SEE THE PLANT...

Don't worry—it might just be resting! Many native plants change with the seasons. Instead of thinking of plants as "gone" or "dead," Indigenous traditions see this as a time of rest and renewal. Some plants sleep under the soil in winter, waiting for the right moment to wake up in spring. Some trees lose their leaves, saving their energy for springtime. Keep looking throughout the year, and you might spot the plant in a new way next time!

# THE BLOMQUIST GARDEN



## LOCATION

Each plant in this booklet is found in the Blomquist Garden of Southeastern Native Plants, located on the southeast side of the Gardens. While some of these plants may be tall and easy to spot, others might be small and hard to see. Keep a lookout for the plant labels on your walk!

 Suggested path

 Plant locations

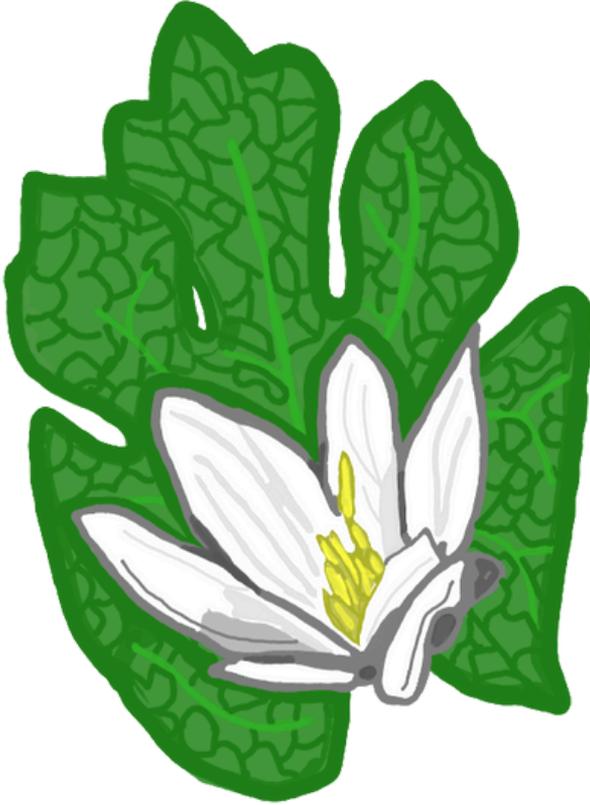
Example plant  
label:

*Fagus grandifolia*

AMERICAN BEECH

Fagaceae - Beech Family  
Canada to FL to TX

# BLOODROOT



## POUGHKONE



Bloodroot's sap is used as a vibrant red dye. Think of something meaningful to you—a favorite animal, a memory, or a symbol of love—and give it a name inspired by nature. How would you use color to express it?

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Powhatan name for bloodroot is *Poughkone*, which means red paint or red dye. This is because the sap of the plant is red!



## CULTURAL USE

Tribes and Nations like the Chippewa, Meskwaki, Haudenosaunee, Iroquois and Omaha have used the red sap for dyeing baskets and clothing. In some Algonquin communities, young men have used the sap as body paint for courting and the Ponca have applied it to their palms before shaking hands with their partner!



## MEDICINAL USE

The Cherokee have used part of the root in small doses for treating coughs, lung inflammation, and croup, and as washes for ulcers and sores. They have also steeped the root in vinegar for skin conditions such as tetterworm.



# TULIP POPLAR



HTG



The tulip poplar is used to craft many items like canoes, houses, and bowls. Looking at the tree, what is something that you would like to create with it?

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Cherokee name for tulip poplar is ᎠᎿᏍᎦ or *tsiyu*.



## CRAFTMANSHIP

Many tribes and nations have used the wood for crafting canoes, furniture, and building houses due to its straight, tall, and easily workable characteristics. Its light, strong wood made it ideal for constructing structures and tools essential to daily life.



## MEDICINE

The bark of the root was brewed into tea to treat fevers and to help with digestive issues. Boiling the bark was also useful for healing snakebites or helping with fractured bones. The bark has been used in cough syrup, and it was also brewed for pinworms and other sicknesses.



# AMERICAN BEECH



JB (KUSI)



The American beech tree is OLD. Look up at the leaves and branches of the tree. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds they create. What can you hear? Do you think these sounds have stayed the same for generations?

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Cherokee name for American beech is *Jb (kusi)*. The Cherokee have used the wood for lumber and have crafted buttons from the wood. They also have used the nuts to alleviate skin issues like poison ivy, burns, frostbite and rashes.



## CULTURAL USE

The seeds and nuts of the American beech offer a rich source of oil and protein. The Chippewa have sought out stashes of beech nuts hidden by chipmunks because they trust the animals' ability to store the best nuts. The Potawatomi have carved mixing and serving bowls from the wood. The Iroquois have also used the seed oil for hair treatment and as a mosquito repellent.



## MEDICINAL USE

The Iroquois have applied boiled beech leaves as a dressing for burns and scalds. They also have used beech leaves as an herbal remedy for various skin conditions. The Rappahannock tribe have used a beech tonic to soothe poison ivy.



# RED OSIER DOGWOOD



## ČHAŇŠÁŠA



The red osier dogwood is a shrub; look at the branches. What makes it different than a tree?  
What do you notice about the shrub?

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Lakota name for red osier dogwood is Čhaŋšáša or *Chaŋ-sha-sha*. The name refers to its color, šá (red).

The Anishinaabe name is kinnikinnick.



## CULTURAL USE

The leaves and inner bark have been smoked, often in sacred pipe ceremonies, by many Indigenous tribes including the Lakota Nation. The bark has served as a tobacco substitute, or "kinnikinnick," and held deep ceremonial significance, conveying prayers in sacred rituals.



## CRAFTSMANSHIP

Young shoots have been used to craft bows and arrows by many Indigenous tribes. Peeled twigs served as toothbrushes with natural teeth-whitening properties. Stems were woven into dreamcatchers, which began with the Chippewa Nation. Bark was used to create vibrant dyes in colors such as light red, dark red, khaki, and yellow. Baskets were also made from the shrub.



# SMOOTH SOLOMON'S SEAL



Smooth Solomon's seal's roots were burned as incense to help people sleep soundly and wake up refreshed. Imagine a plant helping you drift off to sleep—what would it smell like? Close your eyes and think of your favorite calming scent.

## FOOD

The Cherokee have boiled the young shoots of smooth Solomon's seal and eaten them like asparagus. Stems and leaves have been used in salads, and roots can be boiled like potatoes or dried and ground into flour or salt. Ground roots were used for making bread.



## MEDICINE

The Cherokee have used it to treat dysentery, breast and lung diseases, and stomach aches with root tea. The Chippewa have utilized it in sweat lodges, sprinkling a plant-based solution onto hot stones to alleviate headaches.



## SLEEP

The Cherokee have burned the roots as an incense, believed to promote sound sleep and renewal when burned before bed.



# JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT



VRØ TØr RǼ



Jack-in-the-pulpit berries were used to dye clothing a bright red. Imagine discovering colors hidden in nature! Look around your surroundings—what objects or plants might create colors? What colors do you see?

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Cherokee name for Jack-in-the-pulpit is VRƏ TƏr R.Ə, or *dosvna inage ehi*, which means wild turnip.



## CULTURAL USE

The Cherokee have boiled the bright red berries to create a liquid dye for clothing and the Pawnee have used the seeds inside empty gourd shells to make rattles for ceremonies!

## MEDICINAL USE

The Cherokee have used the plant for treating headaches, snake bites, skin diseases, open sores, joint aches, muscle pains, ring worm, and boils. The Chippewa have used plant to relieve sore eyes. Haudenosaunee have also used it for pain, skin and fever.



# MAYAPPLE



ᎠᎩᎠᎩᎠᎩ



The Cherokee soaked seeds in mayapple root juice to deter pests. Pretend you're designing your own secret recipe to protect your garden—what plant or natural ingredient would you use? Draw or write about how your method helps plants grow strong and healthy!

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Cherokee name for mayapple is *O'hoᎠᎵSS*, or *unisgweduga*, which translates to "they wear a hat" or "they have their heads covered, small."

The Osage name is *chesanepesha*, which translates to "it pains the bowels."



## CULTURAL USE

The Cherokee, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, Menominee and Meskwaki tribes have consumed ripe Mayapple fruits. The Cherokee and Meskwaki have used the root juice as a natural insect repellent, soaking corn seeds in it to deter pests and crows before planting.



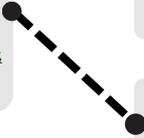
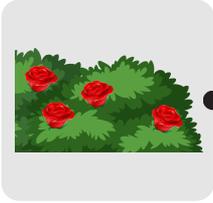
## MEDICINAL USE

The Cherokee have eaten roots to treat ailments such as constipation, earaches, warts, measles, and herpes. Root juice was used for deafness, and as a treatment for ulcers and sores. Mayapple is currently studied for its potential in treating small-cell lung and testicular cancer due to its medicinal compounds!



# MATCH THE PLANT

Draw lines to connect the plant to its name!



Smooth Solomon's Seal

Rose Bush



American Beech

Mayapple



Tulip Poplar

Red Osier Dogwood



Jack-in-the-pulpit

Bloodroot



# TRACE A LEAF!

**Find a leaf on the ground that has fallen. Trace it on this page!**

What do you notice? How many points does it have? What color is it?

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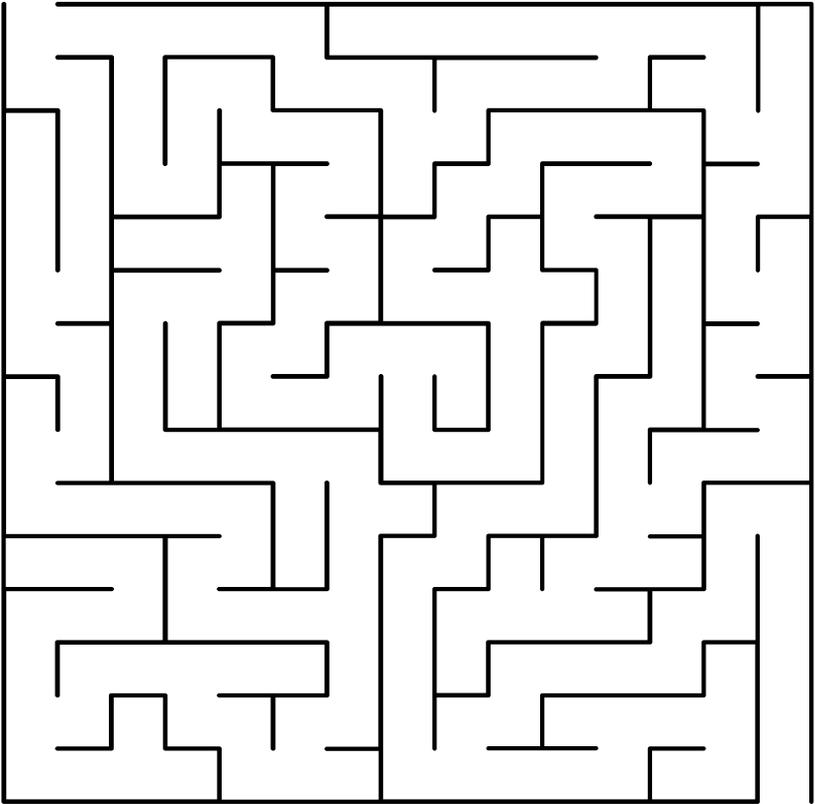
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# GET THE BEE TO THE PLANT!

A bee is trying to pollinate the Red Osier Dogwood, but lost its way! Help it get to the plant!



Start!

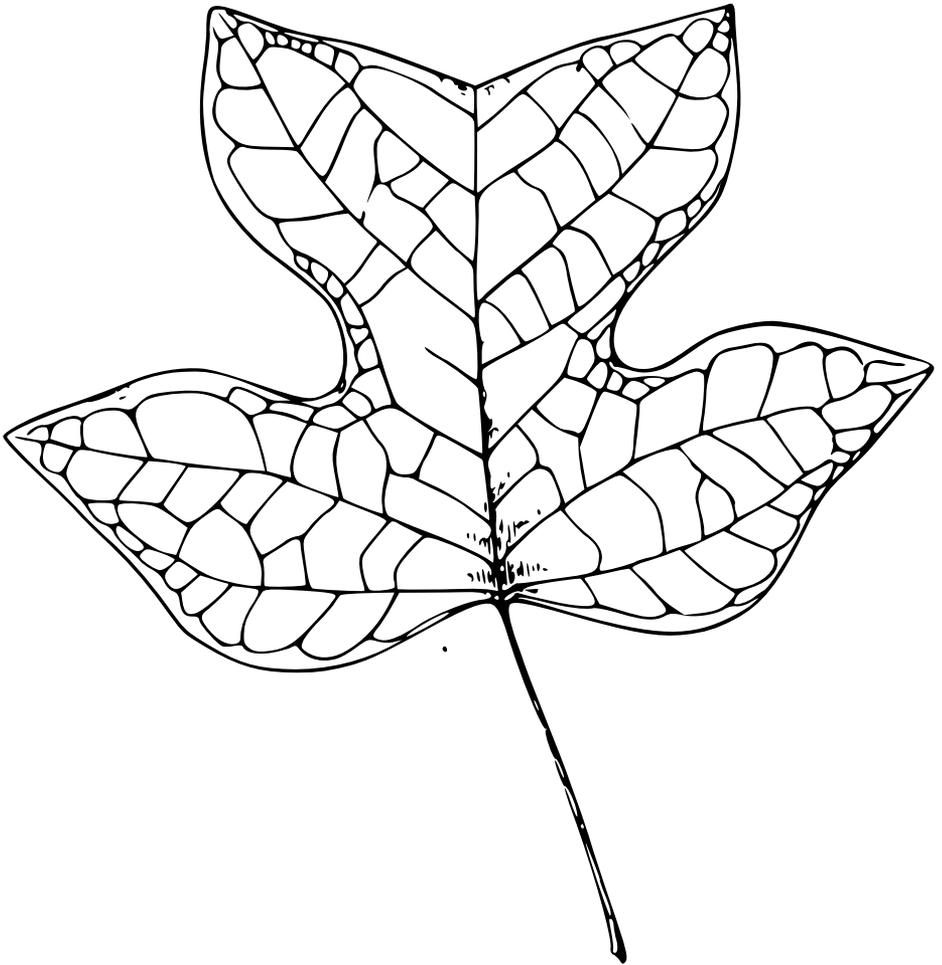


Finish!



# COLORING PAGE

**Color the tulip poplar leaf! What do you notice about it? What do you think it looks like?**



# PLANT SEARCH

Find all of the Native Plants you learned about in this wordsearch!

A M E R I C A N B E E C H R J Z A Z H L  
K K K I W N S U A R J T J K M J P U X F  
A B F R K L I X W N F R S Z A J L Y N B  
Y X B P P W F Y E Z Z A N A Y N A V Q L  
F U U M R M P H C F U M B C A B A W R O  
X H Y Y R Z R L E K T N U E P X E H I O  
S U K H S M R X O T W S I B P E N R E D  
D H I Q I B Q Q G R T A U Y L W N U X R  
H L E N K N Q P N C R P G G E G O S M O  
X D E Y I N J J S T X P S S Y R V B J O  
Q H L M C H O M K D L V Q B V G Q W I T  
V U F O V F F O C N E H X L V Q F N N I  
M U S M O O T H S O L O M O N S S E A L  
J S X J B B G B K B F V S Q A C C D L X  
W J A C K I N T H E P U L P I T R R K E  
R E D O S I E R D O G W O O D F M L B X  
L K T U L I P P O P L A R Q Y I R D I M  
F J O X W P I K K L K R L O T T X O I Q  
E F L C M W P B B Y A A R B Z G C C S L  
H W R J R K I O B G M D I O I S P I Z R

## Word Bank

Red osier dogwood

Tulip poplar

Smooth Solomons Seal

Jack-in-the-pulpit

American beech

Blood root

Mayapple

# CONNECT THE DOTS

Connect the dots to reveal a plant leaf! What tree do you think it came from?



## MEDICINAL DISCLAIMER

Indigenous people have used these plants as medicine for generations, but they should only be prepared and given by trained experts. Some plants can be harmful if used the wrong way or in large amounts. Traditional healers know how to use them safely, so people without proper training should not try to make or use these remedies on their own.



This booklet was created by Emma Smith as part of Duke Garden's *Equity Through Stories* program. To learn more about Emma's work and the program, scan the QR code above!

