

## HOW-TO-DO ACTIVITY- MEET DOUGLAS FIR

### SUGGESTED BOOKS & PLACES

There are several excellent children's books that are specific to the Douglas Fir tree that teach about its role in forest ecology and as wildlife habitat. These are available through libraries or as affordable paperbacks. When read near an old growth or mature Douglas fir tree, these books are very effective in allowing children to personalize their experience with a living tree. There are numerous old growth trees in Seattle (see below), and second growth mature trees are common in Seattle urban areas.

Suggested book	Description/Concepts	Sample guiding questions
<p><b>The Tree in the Ancient Forest</b> Carol Reed-Jones (Dawn Publications 1995) <i>"This is the ancient forest. This is the three hundred year old tree, That grows in the ancient forest. These are the roots that draw food from the soil, To nourish the three-hundred-year-old tree, That grows in the ancient forest."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poetic, repetitive, cumulative verse that is enjoyable to read; dramatic drawings sized to show to class.</li> <li>Food chain, web of life, ecology; emphasis on the relationship between the Douglas fir tree and wildlife users.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is this book teaching us? What are two things you learned about Douglas fir?</li> <li>Describe a food chain mentioned in this story. Include at least three animals or parts of a plant.</li> <li>Who makes their home in the Douglas fir tree in this story. Where do you think some of the other animals make their home? How could we find this answer?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Douglas Fir</b> Wendy Davis (Children's Press 1997) <i>"Deep in one such forest, a baby Douglas fir tree grows. The sapling, as young trees are called, has taken root on an old, dead log. This is a nurse log, and it is a fine place for a sapling to grow. Without sunlight, the little tree would die. So its branches and needles struggle upward towards the sun."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent vocabulary words and their definitions; simple sentences could be read by early readers; side bars give further details; many photographs mixed with drawings.</li> <li>Life cycle of Douglas fir; old growth forest ecology; wildlife habitat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are some new words you learned about the forest and Douglas fir? (sapling, nurse log, truffles, decompose, canopy, snag). Use one or more in a sentence.</li> <li>Describe the life cycle of a Douglas fir. What happens when a Douglas fir tree dies?</li> <li>What animals use the Douglas fir for habitat. How do they use the Douglas fir for habitat? (food, shelter).</li> <li>Draw a picture of an animal using Douglas fir tree for habitat. Label the picture and write an expository sentence describing it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ancient Ones</b> Barbara Bash (Sierra Club Books 1994) <i>"Many Douglas firs live for five hundred years; some make it to a thousand. Over the centuries, these giants show their age much as people do, becoming furrowed, craggy, and full of character. You crane your neck way back to see the treetops. Who is living up in those branches?"</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A read-to-student book with many sensory descriptions; excellent full size drawings with wonderful detail.</li> <li>Life cycle; forest ecology with an emphasis on snags, nurse logs and decomposers; wildlife habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why are dead trees important? Can you see any evidence of dead trees around us? What animals use dead trees for habitat?</li> <li>How do you think an old growth forest is different from other forests? Describe an old growth forest.</li> <li>How old can a Douglas fir live? What animal lives its entire life in the top of trees in the old growth forest?</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Tree</b> Dana Lyons, David Danioth (Illuminations Arts 2002) <i>"Who will house the owl? And who will hold that river's shore? And who will take refuge in my shadow, If my shadow falls no more?"</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fictional story; simple and emotional prose; dramatic large drawings, good for showing to class.</li> <li>Old growth; ecology; environmental protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the main message in this story? What does this story make you think about?</li> <li>How does this story end? What do you think happens to the tree? How do the children in this story help the tree?</li> <li>What animals will be affected if this Douglas fir tree is no more?</li> </ul>

### Finding a Douglas Fir to Visit

**Seward Park, Seattle on Lake Washington:** Three hundred acres of preserved old growth forest with numerous walking trails.

There is an easily accessible old growth Douglas fir tree on the far northeast end of the loop drive near easy parking.

**Schmitz Park, West Seattle:** Fifty acres of mostly preserved old growth forest in a wooded ravine. There is an easily accessible old growth Douglas fir at the far southeast edge of the loop trail. The loop trail is easily walked to observe forest ecology in action.

**Old Growth Douglas Fir near Seattle:** O.O. Denny Park, Juanita; Tiger Mountain, Issaquah; Ed Munro/Seahurst, Burien; Asahel Curtis Old Growth Forest, I-90 east of North Bend.

**Mature second-growth Douglas fir:** Many of the wooded urban parks in Seattle have second growth 60-100 year old trees. These parks include Carkeek, Washington Park Arboretum, Discovery Park and Camp Long. Contact park naturalists prior to visit for more details. Other habitat areas near your school are likely to have second growth mature Douglas fir trees as well.

