

Activity 2-1: Get to Know Your Neighbors

Use the tables on the following pages to record notes about the trees, other plants, and creatures that live in the park. Use one or both tables, and include as many or as few notes as you wish. Feel free to print multiple copies if you need more rows. (But please print double sided!)

Trees and Plants

Once you have learned the name of a tree or plant, make notes about the characteristics that helped you identify it. These might include things like the shape of the leaves, the form and color of flowers, the color or texture of bark, or how stems or branches are structured. These notes can also help you identify other individuals outside the park.

Also note where the tree or plant is located. These notes might be geographic locations, like the northeast corner of the park. You might also mention other trees or plants nearby.

When you have completed it, you can use this table to help others learn about the trees and plants in the park. For example, you might share the table with a friend or a child and see if they can find the plants you described.

Creatures

As you get to know the birds, insects, and other creatures in your park, note who you see on a regular basis. (Throughout most of the United States, this list will probably include squirrels.) Also list those who visit the park once in a while. This list might include some butterflies or less common types of birds. (Though once you start paying attention, you might find some of them are around more often than you realized.) Finally, make note of creatures that delight you with their presence on the rare occasions you notice them. I have fond memories of the early June weekend a large flock of Cedar Waxwings visited a stand of Honey Locusts in Horton Park, and Como Park is large enough to offer sightings of Coyotes a few times a year.

Tree or plant's name	Key identifying characteristics	Location(s) in park

Usual residents	Occasional visitors	Special guests