

2017 Arbor Day Youth Contest Student Instructions

Step 1: Choose a specific tree in your yard, neighborhood, school or local park.

Step 2: Learn as much as you can about the tree. Use these questions to spark your imagination and kick-start your research:

- What species does it belong to?
- How old is it?
- What kind of fruit or seed does it produce?
- What color are its leaves in the fall or flowers in the spring?
- What is its taxonomic classification?
- How does this tree affect you?
- What is its role in the ecosystem where it lives?
- What is the history of this tree or tree species in Richland County?
- Where is this species found?

Step 3: Share what you've learned about your tree by creating a video, biography or Arbor Day ornament.

Video: Create a video nominating your tree for inclusion in a fictitious Real Trees of Richland County reality TV show. Why is your tree important? Why should a TV show about Richland County's trees feature your tree? Videos may include skits, songs, dances, infomercial-style speeches, or other performances. Performances should not exceed five minutes in length. Submit the performance in a ready-to-play video format on CD/DVD with a completed entry form or through an online video sharing service. If the entry is submitted electronically, include the information from the entry form in an e-mail to RichlandSWCD@gmail.com along with a link to the entry. Ideas: Convince the judges to feature your tree by telling them about its unique location and history, its importance to the ecosystem and to humans, and why other people would be interested in seeing and learning more about this particular tree.

Biography: Become your tree's biographer. Using words, photos, drawings, maps, and/or other 2D media, create a brief biography of your tree telling its life story or important "personal stats" (e.g., species, height, age, hometown, habitat, special features, etc.). The biography may take the form of a poster (8.5x11" to 22x28") or a booklet (five pages or fewer). Ideas: You may include a portrait of your tree; drawings, rubbings or pressings of its flowers, bark, fruits, or leaves; depictions or descriptions of your tree's location and habitat; information or illustrations of the roles your tree serves in the ecosystem; and descriptions of its interactions with other trees, animals or people.

Ornament: Create an Arbor Day ornament that represents your tree, or that represents something important about your tree. To create your ornament, you may use only upcycled materials (things that would otherwise be thrown away—used cardboard tubes and boxes, paper and fabric scraps, bottlecaps, lids, found items, etc.) or natural materials (twigs, leaves, bark, etc.) you forage from the habitat where your tree grows. The ornament must be smaller than 5"x5"x5", light enough to hang, and include a mechanism (loop, string, hook) for hanging. Along with your ornament, submit one index card's worth of explanatory information about your ornament and the tree it represents. Ideas: If your tree's lumber was used historically for shipbuilding, your ornament could be a wooden ship; if your tree is important because it shades your house, your ornament might be a tiny house with a tree growing beside it. If your tree's fruits are an important food source for a particular species of bird, your ornament could depict the bird.