

For Tree Tips column on April 14, 2006
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Web Sites For Teaching Kids About Trees

The last Tree Tips I shared some web sites that have good tree care information for tree owners. Some of those same sites have good information for kids and students that teachers or parents can use to help teach kids about trees. One example is the web site for the National Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org. It has Carly the Cardinal sharing information and fun activities for youngster at Carly's kids corner. One activity explains the life of a tree. Another activity uses majestic trees to place events in history.

Another fun, interactive web site is produced by the University of Illinois Extension in Urban Programming at www.urbanext.uiuc.edu. At their home page you can select "just for kids" and have numerous videos and games to play that teach about trees, insects, plants and other natural resources. My favorites on that site are with Pierre the acorn exploring the secret life of a tree or Dr. Arbor talking about trees where there is even a quiz at the end of each session to see if you have learned anything. (I did by the way!)

The large timber company, Mead Corporation, sponsors the website found at www.cyberforest.org. This site uses games to share information about forestry and trees in the United States. It has games in categories for grades 5-7, grades 8-9 and grades 10-12 with also a very complete section for teachers. The picture memory game is especially challenging for all the grade categories.

Another timber industry in North America is Domtar which sponsors a webpage title The Wonderful World of Trees. I could not get a direct link to the site, but you can get to it by doing a search for that title and choosing the site sponsored by Domtar. At this site, there are experiments, games, a tree identification guide and links to other teaching web sites. I especially like the section with the activity at My Tree, My Friend.

The National Christmas Tree Association has a good website that promotes trees and has good information along with some Christmas theme games. Their site is www.christmastree.org and is a good one to visit during the Christmas Holiday season.

Smokey Bear gets his message about being careful with fire and how trees are important at his home page found at www.smokeybear.com. Younger kids especially relate with Smokey and there are some simple games in the campfire games section and printable coloring pages of Smokey and his fire messages.

These are a few of the sites that I have been directed to that share good simple information about trees through interactive messages and games. All of these sites have information for adults as well as children. They provide the visitor with fun activities to learn about trees, how they grow, benefits they provide and the important role trees play in our lives and environment. As with any internet browsing, I encourage the parent, teacher or other adult to visit the suggested sites along with the child and check them out for content and appropriate age level content. And hey, at the same time, the adult may learn something new about trees too!