



Outdoor learning environments (OLEs) encourage diversity of children's play experience and contribute to healthy development. Trees offers a variety of experiences and discoveries by stimulating their senses, providing loose parts for creative play, and encouraging children to crawl, jump, and tunnel as they connect to the natural cycles around them.

This flyer is intended to help parents, educators, and designers select trees that can be used to enhance learning experiences in early childhood programs, schoolyard classrooms, and backyards. The trees highlighted are approved for childcare licensure and balance qualities that engage children with tree selection and care practicalities.



Child Friendly Native Trees of Texas

- * **Sensory:** Create a rich sensory experience by incorporating varied textures, scents, colors, and sounds
- * **Interaction & Movement:** Establishes secret places to hide and exciting pathways to investigate, while drawing children into the space with the movement of waving grasses and the flight of butterflies
- * **Building Materials:** Provides countless materials and loose parts to incorporate into creative play and create structures for exploration or relaxation
- * **Easy Care:** Low maintenance needs or low water requirements
- * **Durability:** Tolerates environmental conditions, losing parts, or physically capable of regenerating under rough treatment



OLE! Texas is an initiative of the Texas Department of State Health Services in partnership with other state agencies, universities, and organizations across Texas. For more information and a full partner listing, visit dshs.texas.gov/ole.

Texas Parks and Wildlife - Teaching children outdoors: tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/parents-and-teachers/taking-children-outdoors
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - Dig Deeper: wildflower.org/project/outdoor-learning-environments

This list is intended to provide general information only. OLE! Texas partners disclaim any liability or responsibility for any allergy, sensitivity, illness, or injurious effect that any person or animal may suffer as a result of the information herein. For information or concerns about the toxicity of plants, contact the local Poison Control Center in your area. www.aapcc.org



Texas Child Friendly Native Trees

Common Name	Scientific Name	#	Sensory	Interaction & Movement	Building Materials	Easy Care	Durability
NATIVE TREES							
Desert Willow	<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	1	T, V, S, E	P, H, B, S	X	X	H, D, P, DR
Cedar Elm	<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>	2	T, V	P, B, S	X	X	C, H, D, S
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	3	V	Hide, P, H, B, S	X	X	DR
Little Gem Magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	4	T, V, S	Play, P, S	X		C
Texas Persimmon	<i>Diospyros texana</i>	5	T, V, E	Play, P, B, S	X		H, D
Mexican Ash	<i>Fraxinus berlandieriana</i>	6	T, V	B, S	X	X	C, H, D, S
Anacua	<i>Ehretia anacua</i>	7	T, V, S, E	P, B, S	X	X	H, D, P, S
American Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	8	V, E	Hide, P, B, S, M	X		S, F, Fi, P, DR
American Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	9	T, V, H	P, B, M	X	X	H
Flameleaf Sumac	<i>Rhus copallinum</i>	10	V, E	Hide, P, S	X	X	P
American Basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i>	11	T, S	P, S	X	X	S
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	12	T, V	Play, B, S	X	X	C, D
Southern Wax Myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	13	V, S	B, S			C, D, HT, F
Fremont Cottonwood	<i>Populus fremontii</i>	14	V, T	S, M		X	F
Boxelder	<i>Acer negundo</i>	15	E	P, B, S, M	X		D
Bald Cypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	16	T, S	S, M	X		S, F, Fi, P, DR

Sensory: T - Touch, V - Visual, S - Smell, H - Hearing, E - Edible

Movement (M) from Wildlife: P - Pollinators, H - Hummingbirds, B - Butterflies, S - Songbirds, M - Mammals

Durable: Tolerance for C - Cold, H - Heat, D - Drought, P - Picking, HT - High traffic, S - Shade, F - Flood, Sa - Saline, Fi - Fire, P - Pollution; DR - Deer resistant