

## Curricular Connections

# The Tree House

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### Place-based Ecology and Natural History:

Old dead standing trees are very important parts of the forest ecosystem. They provide food, shelter, and nesting territory to many different animals, birds, and insects. This story shares some information about animal homes and the interconnectedness of plant and animal species in the forest. It talks about the dietary needs of species such as flying squirrel and woodpecker and the materials needed for a bluebird to build her nest. It highlights the amazing adaptation of the woodpecker's beak and tongue to hammer through wood and offers one way to identify a white pine tree in old age.

### Explore:

- Find a dead tree with holes in its trunk and peak inside. Sometimes you can knock gently on the trunk and a bird will poke their head out of a hole!
- Listen for woodpeckers and try to spot one!
- Forage for wild edibles and have a seed/berry snack in the forest on your walk (don't eat anything wild until checking in with a knowledgeable adult)
- Build a bluebird nest out of dried grass, pine needles, and turkey feathers (if you can find one!)
- Look for carpenter ants and their homes in dead trees.
- Find a white pine tree and look for its whorls of branches to identify it.
- Build an animal home out of available dead and down materials.
- Draw a picture of an animal Tree House and who lives in it.

### Reflect and Share:

- If you were a creature in the forest, what would you do with a hole in a tree?
- Where are other places you have seen holes in the forest? Who do you think made them?
- Do you ever have trouble making friends? What do you do, when you are feeling lonely and in need of friends?

### Photos:

