

Curricular Connections

The Gift of the Maple Tree

Place-based Ecology:

Maple trees provide for us year round in so many ways. They provide shade, beauty, fire wood, syrup, and oxygen. They are a host tree to the rosy maple moth, an early spring flower for pollinators like the wild bee, and their sap and fruit provide nourishment to squirrels and rodents. Their tender shoots are browsed by deer and rabbits and they make great places for downy woodpeckers to build their nests. This tree is loved by humans and more than humans alike. I got the idea for this story after reading *Maple Nation*, a chapter in Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*. This tree is of huge cultural importance to many Indigenous groups across the northeast and it is threatened by climate change as it can't migrate north as easily as other species. [Red Maple](#) grows in wet areas and is quite abundant. It is used commercially for canoe paddles and cutting boards.

Explore:

- Learn how to collect and propagate tree seeds to plant in your yard, school, or neighborhood.
- Turn a vacant lot into a green space by making seed bombs and throwing them into a brown space.
- Find a body of water and throw some small stones onto it and make a wish for a special tree in your life.
- Tap maple trees and make maple syrup!
- Dip fall leaves in beeswax and make ornaments.
- Learn about tree's lenticels and how they exchange gasses.
- Make maple wood cookie necklaces or find a carpenter nearby and make maple cutting boards.
- Research the various species that have a relationship with maple and draw a web of life with the tree in the center.
- What places in the world are devoid of trees and how are the people in these places addressing the problem?
- Have a year round sit spot under a maple tree and make observations through the seasons.

Reflect and Share:

- What would you choose to give the maple tree as a gift and why?
- Do you have maple trees in your yard and what have you noticed about them?

Photos:

