

## Spring's Flowering Trees



image courtesy Library of Congress

**Mini Fact:** Washington, D.C., is famous for its cherry blossoms.

In spring, many flowers begin blooming on the ground and in the trees. Have the trees in your neighborhood burst into bloom yet?

The Mini Page celebrates Arbor Day, April 26, by taking a good look at the beautiful trees of spring.

### Blooming time

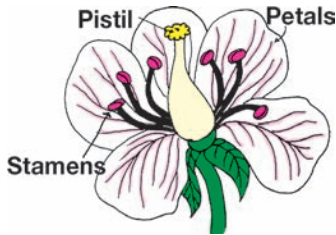
Most trees bloom in the spring. However, some trees, such as the hazelnut, bloom in late winter. Others, such as some magnolias, bloom during the spring and the summer.

Trees might also bloom when something goes wrong with their environment. For example, hurricanes can strip the leaves off many trees. Afterward, some of these trees may start to flower, even if it's the wrong season for blooming.

Sometimes during mild winters, trees flower early. But if snow and ice come after the flowers are out, these flowers die. When it warms up again, trees may start growing leaves, but they may not be able to produce fruit.

### Reproduction

All trees have flowers. It is the flowers that make the seeds. Pollen is a fine golden dust from flowers. In order for a flower to make seeds, pollen from the male part (the stamens) must reach the female part (the pistil). This is called **pollination** (pah-luh-NAY-shun).



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After the female part receives the pollen, it can make seeds. Some tree types have male and female flowers on the same tree. Others have only female flowers or male flowers.



Kids plant a tree as part of an Arbor Day event.

### Fruits

Trees need a way to spread their seeds. One way they do this is to grow a fruit that encloses their seeds. Animals carry away the fruit. Or animals eat the fruit and the seeds pass through their bodies.

The sugary food in juicy fruits, such as apples and oranges, helps new seeds get a good start.

Not all fruit is sweet and juicy. A nut is actually a dry fruit with a hard, dry fruit ball around the seed.

### Helping the environment

Flowering trees help the environment and the economy in many ways. Trees:

- create beauty;
- attract tourists;
- provide shade and cooling;
- help keep waterways clean;
- make food for people and animals;
- provide shelter for animals;
- produce oxygen;
- provide fuel for cooking and heating.

Neighbors plant trees during a Baltimore community project.



photo by Scott Kashnow

### What is Arbor Day?

Arbor Day celebrates the importance of trees. (Arbor means tree.) National Arbor Day falls on the last Friday in April.

Each state also has its own Arbor Day.

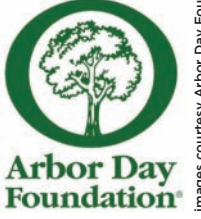
Many states in the southern United States celebrate it in February or March. Many northern states celebrate it in May.

### Arbor Day history

Arbor Day was started in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton, a journalist and politician in Nebraska. At that time, the state had very few trees, and settlers missed them.

Morton urged Nebraskans to have a tree-planting holiday. On the first Arbor Day, the people in that state planted more than 1 million trees.

In 1885, Nebraska named it a legal holiday, to be celebrated on April 22, Morton's birthday. In 1970, President Richard Nixon first declared that Arbor Day would be celebrated nationally on the last Friday in April.



images courtesy Arbor Day Foundation

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [arborday.org/kids](http://arborday.org/kids)

### At the library:

- "Tree" by Richard Spilsbury
- "Healthy Trees, Healthy Planet" by Anne Flounders

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of flowering trees are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ANIMAL, ARBOR,  
BLOOM, DAY,  
FLOWER, FRUIT, HELP,  
IMPORTANT, LEAVES,  
NEBRASKA, NUTS,  
PISTIL, PLANT, POLLEN,  
POLLINATION, SEEDS,  
SPRING, STAMENS,  
TREES, WASHINGTON.

R E W O L F I Y T N A L P D N  
H I F Q B A R B O R Q F V A O  
E M R K L A K S A R B E N Y T  
L T U P O L L I N A T I O N G  
P R I Z O X N U T S P G B P N  
Y E T W M N E L L O P J Z S I  
P E S N E M A T S Z H W C D H  
G S P T N A T R O P M I A E S  
P I S T I L F S E V A E L E A  
L A M I N A G N I R P S Y S W

## Cook's Corner

### Lentil Mental Magic Soup

#### You'll need:

- 1 1/2 cups red lentils
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 4 cups water

- 2 vegetable bouillon cubes with herbs or sea salt



#### What to do:

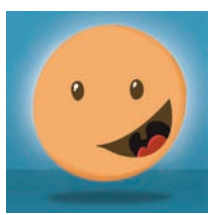
1. Rinse lentils really well in a fine-mesh strainer, then place all ingredients in a large pot. Bring to a big bubbly boil for a minute or so.
2. Turn heat to medium-low, stir and simmer, covered, for about 15 minutes until lentils become soft and mashy.
3. Turn off heat, then stir and mash well with a wooden spoon. Make it thinner if you like by stirring in 1 cup water. Soup will thicken overnight. Serves 4 to 6.

Adapted from "The Help Yourself Cookbook for Kids" with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing ([andrewsmcmeel.com](http://andrewsmcmeel.com)).

\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

## 7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. hippo or mouse, for example (6) \_\_\_\_\_
2. learning about (8) \_\_\_\_\_
3. 12 months (4) \_\_\_\_\_
4. not valuable (7) \_\_\_\_\_
5. what a college graduate has (6) \_\_\_\_\_
6. necessary (9) \_\_\_\_\_
7. having life (5) \_\_\_\_\_

REE	ORT	LESS	AL
YE	YING	ANT	VE
ALI	USE	AN	DEG
IM	AR	IMP	STUD

Answers: animal, studying, year, useless, degree, important, alive.

## Mini Jokes



**Timmy:** How do trees get on the internet?  
**Tina:** They log in!

## Eco Note



The rings on a tree stump can tell us how old the tree is and what the weather was like during each year of the tree's life. The light-colored rings represent wood that grew in the spring and early summer, while the dark rings represent wood that grew in the late summer and fall. One light ring plus one dark ring equals one year of the tree's life. Tree rings usually grow wider in warm, wet years and are thinner in years when it is cold and dry. If the tree has experienced stressful conditions, such as a drought, the tree might hardly grow at all in those years.

adapted from [climatekids.nasa.gov](http://climatekids.nasa.gov)

## For later:

Look in your newspaper for Arbor Day events nearby.

**Teachers:** For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: [bit.ly/MPstandards](http://bit.ly/MPstandards). And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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