



USI Trails

AUTUMN SCAVENGER HUNT

Autumn begins on September 22. The cooler temperature brings a whole new USI Trails. Scavenger hunts take on a whole new color when you hit all the trails. Make sure you wear good shoes and put on plenty of bug spray!

<p>Harvestmen spiders are most conspicuous in the fall. They hang out in groups as the weather gets cool. Don't worry, they have bad eye site!</p>	<p>Many squirrels are starting to store nuts for the winter. You can find all kinds of nuts of the trails. Some you will find include: walnut, hickory and pecan</p>	<p>The woods are full of animals. See if you can spot their tracks after a rainy day: deer, raccoon, wild turkey, goose and worms!</p>
<p>Fall is a wonderful time to examine decomposers. Roll over a log and see what is there.</p>	<p>Don't forget the decomposers like mushrooms and fungus. See if you can spot the colorful False Turkey Tail growing on a downed tree,</p>	<p>Lichen are also decomposers. They absorb pollution in the atmosphere. They can be green or a greyish color.</p>
<p>All sorts of trees means all sorts of leaves. Look for the following types of leaves: Serrated edges lobed the state tree leaf a long leaf a small leaf the biggest leaf you can find</p>	<p>Collect all sorts of pinecones on campus and along the trails. You can use these to make peanut butter bird feeders to put out on the trees in the winter. Or put them in a paper bag and wait for them to release their seeds.</p>	<p>Look for examples of Fibonacci Sequences in nature. This is naturally occurring spirals in nature. Hint: they abound in flowers. Check out around the gazebo and the sunflowers by the ceramics center.</p>

USG Trails

WEATHER FOLKLORE

A STUDY ON THE PERSIMMON TREE

There are trees on the trails that offer all sorts of tasty things to eat in the fall. One of our favorite trees that has culinary delights are persimmon trees. You can find an awesome grove of them up at the Bent Twig Outdoor Education Center. Just go behind the baseball field, on the way to the USI/Burdette Trail and you will find them.



Fruits September–October. Fruit orange to orange-purple, about $\frac{3}{4}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and wide, globe-shaped; sweet, edible when ripe. Prior to ripening, astringent and puckery to taste. Persimmons look a little like a tomato.

FUN FACTS ABOUT PERSIMMONS

The scientific name for persimmon is *Diospyros virginiana*. *Diospiros* means food of the gods or divine fruit.

The word "persimmon" is from the Powhatan language and was probably pronounced *putchamin*, which means choke fruit. People think it was called choke fruit because it is so sour when not ripe, it makes you choke.

The indigenous people of America used the fruit of the persimmon to make bread and medicine for the throat and mouth.

Early pioneers claimed persimmons cured diseases like dysentery, thrush and hemorrhoids!

Those same pioneers made wine from the fruit and called it *possom toddy*.

The hard seeds were used as buttons during the Civil War. People also roasted and ground the seeds for coffee, claiming it tasted as good as the real thing!

US Trails

STUDY OF PERSIMMON TREES



PREDICTING THE WEATHER

All sorts of folklore exists about predicting the weather. Some examples include: if the official ground hog, Puxatawny Phil sees his shadow, that means six more weeks of winter. Another folklore is if the Woolly Bear caterpillar has longer black stripe around it in comparison to it's orange stripe, it's supposed to be a hard winter.

There is similar weather folk lore about persimmon trees. Break open a persimmon seed you find from the groves, or any place locally (this won't work if you get your persimmons from a grocery store!) Look inside the kernel of the seed and you will see a shape.

- Spoon shape-means lots of snow to shovel
- Knife shape-means cutting wind and lots of ice
- Fork shape - a mild winter with a powdery snow.

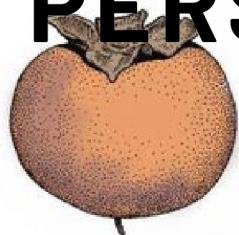


Fork	Knife	Spoon

Now it's your turn to predict what kind of winter we'll have

- Collect 20 persimmons from the grove at USI or locally. Since they are hard to open, you'll need some extras
- Pull the flat seed out of the fruit and cut it open gently with a sharp knife
- What do you see inside?
- Graph it on the chart to the left
- Based on your graph, what kind of winter will we have? Snowy? Icy? Or mild.

US Trails STUDY OF PERSIMMON TREES



OTHER RESOURCES

EVPL books about
Weather Folklore

Let's Explore Weather Lore

Sandra Hanson

ebook

Grandma Says: Weather Lore

from Meteorologist Cindy Day

ebook

*Can it Really Rain Frogs? The
World's*

Strangest Weather Events

Spencer Christian and Antonia Felix

book

Weather Legends: North American

Lore & the Science of Weather

Carol Vogel

webite