

Unit 1: Meet the Trees

There are lots of tree friends to meet in the forest! Short trees, tall trees, trees with needles, trees with leaves... how will we find our American chestnut friends? We will have to use identification! Every kind of tree has unique and special features to look for that can tell you what kind of tree it is. Can you find the American chestnuts in these pictures?

1. Leaf shape: The American chestnut has long leaves, shaped like a canoe, with a pointed tip and edges that look like sharp teeth.

A.



B.



C.



2. Flower: American chestnut flowers are called catkins. A catkin is long and rope like with many tiny flowers all lined up together.

A.



B.



C.



3. Fruit: The dark, smooth nut can be used for delicious food, but first you'll have to crack through the outer shell (husk). The husk is covered in bristly, thick hairs. Make sure not to confuse the American chestnut for the horse chestnut which has short sharp spikes instead of bristly spines!

A.



B.



C.



4. Bark: When the tree is young it has smooth bark but mature American chestnut trees have grayish brown bark with lots of big long cracks (furrows) and ridges running up and down the trunk.

A.



B.



C.



Teacher's Bio:

Sonia Horowitz

Sonia is a homesteader, forager, and artist living in Mason, WI. She is passionate about inspiring families and individuals to safely and respectfully get out and explore the natural world. Along with online education, Sonia also enjoys live learning presentations from local walks and classes to conference lectures and workshops. This year she will be leading classes on ethnomycology at the Midwest Women's Herbal Conference Mycelium Mysteries event, the Georgia Mushroom Club, and the South Carolina Upstate Mycological Society.

Sonia's heart truly belongs to the forests of Lake Superior, but she is also heavily involved in leading women's empowerment groups and researching cultural history especially the history, mythology, and culture of her own ancestors, the Norse and Germanic peoples.

Sonia has a certification in the study of the Icelandic Sagas and is available to speak on topics of Norse culture and mythology as well as on the European witch crazes. It is Sonia's belief that the earth supports all people and by exploring our roots we can find good medicines for our own individual minds, bodies, and souls and learn more about how we can help support the earth in turn.

Her goals currently in progress are to transform her homestead (Amanita Acres) into a place of community and family learning. You can find Sonia at the Amanita Acres facebook page and at www.amanitaacres.com