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Mission: Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

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Observing Leaves

Even if you can't identify a tree by name, you can practice observing. Pick a leaf from a tree in your yard or use the photos of a red maple and a sugar maple below to make some specific observations. It is best to have the actual leaf, so you can observe by touching. Here are some questions to ask and answer about different leaves. Is the leaf simple (single leaf on stem) or compound (multiple leaflets on one stem)? Are the leaf edges smooth, toothed or lobed? Is the upper surface of the leaf rough or smooth? Is the lower surface of the leaf rough or smooth? What colors do you see in the leaf? What color is the stem of the leaf? Are the veins in the leaf parallel or netted (fan out)? Are the veins raised on the top or bottom surface or neither? Do you see any sign of insect damage? Once you are done observing, put the leaf in the pages of an old phone book to dry, so you can start a leaf collection, which was a standard assignment for eighth graders in "the old days"!

