

Dig Deeper

# DISCOVER FORESTS



## What makes up Surrey's urban forest?

When we picture a forest, we often imagine a large, wild and dense growth of evergreen trees. Another type of forest, the urban forest, surrounds us right here in Surrey. What can we learn about the urban forest?

### Guiding Questions

- + What does a forest look like?
- + What different forms can a forest take (i.e. rainforest, national forest, local forest)?
- + What or who lives in forests? Is this different in an urban forest?
- + What do you want to know about urban forests?
- + How have plants and animals adapted to survive in urban forests?
- + What small human actions might be harmful to the urban forest?
- + How do forests help our planet and us?
- + What are some larger threats to the ecological integrity of the urban forest?
- + How have traditional Indigenous harvesting practices ensured the sustainable use of trees and forests?
- + Who takes care of/manages different kinds of forests? Why is it important to do so? (Hint: think of different levels of government.)
- + How can you help care for the urban forest? (Hint: think directly and indirectly.)

# Background

By definition, a forest is a large and dense growth of trees and other plants. It is also an ecosystem with a community of plants and animals interacting with each other and their environment.

An urban forest is the forest or collection of trees that grows within an urban area (i.e., a city, town, or suburb). It includes trees on streets and boulevards, in front- and backyards, and in parks. It also includes the natural areas surrounding these trees, (e.g., flowers and shrubs, grasslands and meadows, streams and other waterways, fish and other wildlife). Basically, the urban forest is the city's ecosystem. An urban forest may not seem like a typical forest because it doesn't always have dense tree growth. Approximately eighty percent of Canada's population lives in urban areas, so urban forests are often the forests that people experience.

Caring for the urban forest is everyone's responsibility. Stewardship begins with a relationship to place. Strengthen your students' relationship with the urban forest by making regular and repeated teacher-led visits to nearby nature.



**Surrey Parks works together with the community to celebrate nature and protect the environment.**

Visit us online to plan your park visits, connect with nearby nature and help your students become stewards of our urban forest.

# Curricular Connections

## Content for students to explore:

**Kindergarten:** basic needs of plants and animals

**Grade 1:** structural features of living things in the local environment, names of local plants and animals

**Grade 2:** relationship between people and the environment in different communities

**Grade 3:** biodiversity in the local environment, local landforms

**Grade 4:** forest biomes

**Grade 5:** the nature of sustainable practices around BC's resources, First Peoples knowledge of sustainable practices (particularly of trees)

## Curricular competencies for students to develop:

- Experience and interpret the local environment
- Make observations aimed at identifying their questions about the natural world
- Identify some of the social, ethical, and environmental implications
- Communicate ideas, explanations, and processes in a variety of ways
- Social responsibility to the environment
- Express and reflect on personal or shared experiences of place



## Additional Resources

City of Surrey's Mapping Online System (COSMOS) at [cosmos.surrey.ca](https://cosmos.surrey.ca)  
City of Surrey *Natural Areas Management Plan*