

Taking Photos of Trees for Expert Identification and Urban Forest Inventories



Extension personnel often receive questions regarding the identification of a particular tree. Digital photography, email, and text messaging make submitting specimens for identification very quick and easy.

Digital Photography

1. Take close-up photos of the specimen with a digital camera. Please consider the following:
 - Select a specimen that shows as many distinguishing characteristics of a species as possible. These would include leaves and twig, flowers, fruit, bark, form, and position in the landscape.
 - If there is a dramatic variation in leaf shape on a single plant, include photographs of all leaf shapes (**Figure 1**).
 - Unique characteristics are particularly important to include, such as thorns, twigs and branching patterns, or fruits and nuts (**Figure 2**).
 - Include a photograph that shows the characteristics of the bark (**Figure 3**).
 - Finally, send a photograph of the tree in the landscape to show its form (**Figure 4**).
 - If necessary, crop the photos to reduce their size for easier downloading.
2. When sending your photographs to Extension personnel, include your contact information and any description you would like to provide about the plant, such as its size, history, or habitat. If you like, you may use the **Tree Identification Request Form** on the back. Send photographs via email to your urban forest inventory facilitator/coordinator/team leader, or regional Extension Forestry Specialist.



Figure 1. Leaf



Figure 2. Maturing Fruit



Figure 3. Tree Bark



Figure 4. Landscape and form.

Tree Identification Request Form

Specimen Description

Specimen includes leaves twigs fruit stem other

Plant origin naturally occurring planted unknown

Plant size (approx.) height diameter (at breast height)

Form single stem multi-stem

Specialist's Response

Common name: _____

Scientific name: _____

Normal range: _____

Habitat: _____

Primary uses: _____

Specialist

Date

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By John D. Kushla, PhD, Extension/Research Professor, North Mississippi Research and Extension Center.



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