

# Taking Photos of Trees for Expert Identification

Extension personnel often receive questions regarding 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, clear 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, twigs, flowers, fruit, bark, form, and position in the landscape.
  - If there is 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**).
    - ♦ Make note of the type of site on which the tree is growing (wet, dry, flooded, etc.)
  - Finally, send a photograph of the tree in the landscape to show its form (**Figure 4**).
    - ♦ If necessary, crop photos to reduce their size or use a medium-quality setting.
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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