

STUDY QUESTIONS

TO “MINNESOTA’S MIGHTY OAKS”

Study and learn facts and ideas based on this Young Naturalists nonfiction story in *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, January-February 2023, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine.

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine is your guide to wild things. Every other month, six times a year, the magazine arrives in your school library. Each one has a story for Young Naturalists like you. **Are you curious about wild things?** Young Naturalists tells true stories that can answer all kinds of questions such as these—

Have you ever heard of a purple wartyback? How about a pink heelsplitter, pimple-back, or monkeyface? All are Minnesota freshwater mussels. Read Young Naturalists stories to learn which species (kinds) of critters live in Minnesota—frogs, salamanders, snakes, wild cats, wild dogs, weasels, mice, and rabbits.

Want to **peek inside the den of a red fox** and see how the kits grow up? Are you a rock hound searching for agates? Have you ever wondered what’s alive under snow? How animals see? Why is a bluebird blue? How birds fly?

Would you like to hear the true story of **giants of the ice age**? Young Naturalists also tells you about the underground universe. You can read the story of a tiny owl that went to a hospital with an injured wing. Find out about a boy who worked in a logging camp. Read the story of Ojibwe children today hunting and gathering like their ancestors did.

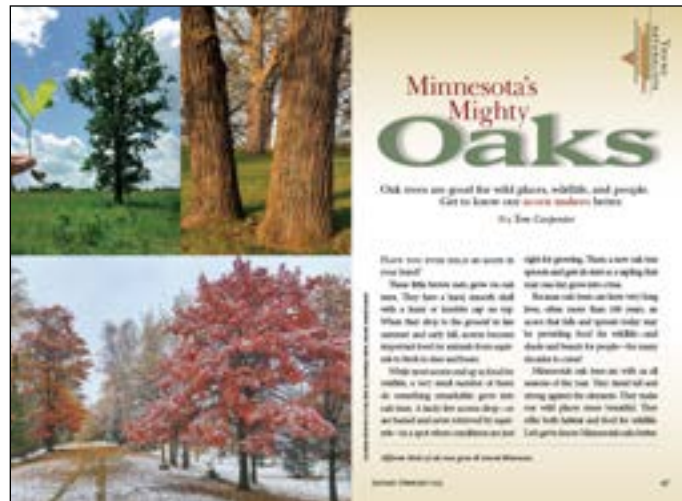
Learn how to get started **camping, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or canoeing**.

Find these stories and more online at www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists.

Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!

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1. NAME FOUR KINDS OF ANIMALS THAT EAT ACORNS.

2. MATCH EACH OAK SPECIES WITH ONE OR MORE TRAITS PRESENTED IN THE STORY:

White Oak

Inside of acorn cap is hairy

Rounded cap covers about 1/4 of the nut

Bur Oak

Bark is almost black

Acorn cap has a hairy fringe

Northern Red Oak

Leaf lobes are pointed

Leaves look a little bit like a hand

Acorn cap is flat and only covers the top

Swamp White Oak

Acorns mature in two years

Acorns fall and sprout in the spring

Black Oak

Grows in every county in Minnesota

Northern Pin Oak

Acorns often grow in pairs

Acorns fall and sprout in the fall

Leaves are sharp like pins

Widest part of leaf is in the middle

Acorn cap covers almost half of the nut

Leaves have fat lobes

3. ACORNS FORM FROM:

- a. female flowers
- b. male flowers
- c. both
- d. neither

4. ACORNS ARE RICH IN WHAT KIND OF NUTRIENT?

5. HOW DO TURKEYS BREAK ACORNS UP INTO SMALL BITS SO THEY CAN DIGEST THEM?

6. HOW DO SQUIRRELS HELP OAK TREES REPRODUCE?

7. DESCRIBE THREE WAYS CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS OAK TREES.

8. HOW DO OAKS BENEFIT BIRDS?

- a. They provide food in the form of acorns.
- b. They provide food in the form of insects.
- c. They provide places to nest.
- d. a and c
- e. All of the above

9. NAME FOUR WAYS OAKS HELP PEOPLE.

10. WHAT KINDS OF OAKS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE FOUND IN A MINNESOTA SAVANNA?

11. TRUE OR FALSE: OAK WILT ONLY HURTS WHITE OAKS.

12. OAK WILT IS CAUSED BY:

- a. climate change
- c. a fungus
- d. DNR foresters
- e. the two-lined chestnut borer

CHALLENGE QUESTION: What percent of Minnesota does savanna cover today?

MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS PRACTICE ITEMS

1. TRUE OR FALSE: ANIMALS EAT ALMOST ALL OF THE ACORNS AN OAK TREE MAKES.

2. AN OAK TREE CAN LIVE FOR HOW MANY YEARS?

- a. one hundred
- b. one thousand
- c. one million
- d. one billion

3. NAME THREE TRAITS THAT ARE USEFUL FOR IDENTIFYING OAK TREES.

4. MALE OAK FLOWERS PRODUCE _____, WHILE FEMALE OAK FLOWERS PRODUCE _____.

5. WHY IS BENEATH AN OAK A GREAT PLACE FOR A SPRING-BLOOMING FLOWER?

6. WHY IS OAK WOOD GOOD FOR MAKING THINGS?

7. WHY DO YOU THINK FIRES HELP PREVENT A SAVANNA FROM BECOMING A FOREST?

VOCABULARY

decade – 10 years

elements – weather

fungus – an organism that is neither plant nor animal and relies on other living things for food

gizzard – a part of a bird's digestive tract that grinds food into tiny bits

lobe – a curved portion that sticks out from an object

mature – grow up

sapling – a tree less than 4 inches in diameter 4½ feet above the ground

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