

What is it? Acorn

Where is it from? An oak tree in Taylor Park

What is its story? Acorns are the seed/nut that comes from oak trees. They are formed by small, stringy flowers that show up on the trees in the spring. These flowers then pollinate with other flowers and an acorn grow throughout the year until falling from the tree fully developed in the fall.



Squirrels, mice, birds, and many other animals eat acorns - or in the case of squirrels, store them to be eaten later in the winter. Acorns are poisonous for humans to eat, but many cultures have created methods to take the poisons out of acorns so they can be eaten, most notably the Native Americans or North America.

Observe	Think	Wonder
<p>What do you see (smell, feel) in this object?</p> <p><i>Try to make as many observations as possible! Spend a couple minutes pointing out details. Write or draw below.</i></p>	<p>What inferences can you draw from your observations?</p>	<p>What questions do you have about this item?</p>

What is it? Gray Squirrel

Where is it from? It lives in Taylor Park

What is its story? The Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) is native to North America. Gray squirrels eat bark, berries, nuts and other parts of plants. They can climb trees with their sharp claws and like to jump from tree to tree to get around town. Gray squirrels are rodents, so they have four front teeth that never stop growing! They keep their teeth short by chewing on hard nuts and bark though, so their teeth never get too long.



In the summer, squirrels make big nests in trees and can be seen all around town, chowing down on their favorite snacks. In the fall, squirrels bury nuts that they will later dig back up to eat during the winter. In the winter, squirrels find a nice big hole in a tree to hibernate in, coming out only to search out a stash of nuts when they get hungry.

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What is it? Blade of grass

Where is it from? Taylor Park - and fields everywhere

What is its story? Grass is an important part of the lives of people and animals alike. There are thousands of kinds of grass in the world. Grass provides a home and shelter for many kinds of insects and small animals. It is also eaten as food by things as small as ants or as large as horses. During the year, grasses flower and produce seeds, usually called grains. Some grass grains are even eaten by humans, such as wheat, barley, and oats.

Did you know that grass helps us breathe? Every day, grass absorbs carbon dioxide (what we breathe out) and sunshine, and converts them into oxygen, the gas that we humans need to breathe to survive. The chemical that grass uses to do this is called chlorophyll, which is a green color. So the next time someone asks you why the grass is green, tell them because it's photosynthesizing!



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What is it? Pine Needle

Where is it from? Pine Trees

What is its story? Pine Needles are found on Pine Trees, which are a type of tree that is called coniferous. Coniferous means that the trees that produce needles instead of trees and cones instead of fruit and seeds. Pine needles work just like leaves, but they are a different shape and stay green and on the tree year-round, instead of falling off the tree every autumn. In addition, pine needles have a waxy exterior, which keeps them healthier when the temperature gets cold.



Even though there are many pine needles growing in nature, very few animals eat them. Other than a few insects and small mammals, most animals pass do not eat pine needles. Pine needles have very few nutrients the needle that would help animals grow and be healthy, and the waxy coating on pine needles tastes gross to most animals, so they pass it up for a tastier snack.

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What is it? Ant

Where is it from? Underground in Taylor Park

What is its story? Ants live in underground colonies of tunnels. The ants you usually see above ground are worker ants, however there are also breeder ants and queen ants that stay underground in the colony. Ants eat many types of plants and plant matter, although they usually take their food back to the colony to eat instead of eating it off the plant.



There are over 12,000 species of ants in the world, and most ants can lift up to 20 times what they weigh! Ants are insects, meaning that they have antennae, 6 legs, and 3 body segments- also, the queen and breeder ants have wings, which the workers do not.

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Pick an object in the park that you think is cool. What does it look like and feel like? Does it have a smell? Does it make a sound? How does it do these things?

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What is its story?

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