

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).



Figure 1. Leaf.



Figure 2. Maturing fruit.

- 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 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

Publication 3678 (POD-10-25)

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Produced by Agricultural Communications.

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. ANGUS L. CATCHOT JR., Director