What Tree is That – and Why?

No matter where you live in the United States, trees are your neighbors. More than 747 million acres of forests grace our rural lands in the 50 states, and there are another 70 million acres of trees within our urban areas. Even densely populated New York City has more than 5 million trees. Knowing the names of our green neighbors and the features that make each unique can be personally satisfying and can help build greater appreciation for the many benefits trees provide.

The Arbor Day Foundation's 159-page *What Tree Is That?* field guide is one of the most colorfully illustrated and easiest to use of many available guides to identification.

How to Use a Dichotomous Key

Whether it is the key in *What Tree Is That?* or another publication, a dichotomous key is built on somewhat the same principle that is behind binary calculators and computer technology. Basically, there are always just two choices: on or off. In the tree key, you are asked a question about the unknown specimen and given two choices (occasionally three or four). When you answer "yes" to one of the choices, it sends you to another page for another decision or to a picture of the specimen in hand.

Example for Keying Out an Eastern White Pine

IN THIS ISSUE, ALSO LEARN ABOUT:

- The terminology for leaf identification

- The many helpful clues to identification besides leaves

- What's inside a leaf and in the soil under a tree