



# Texas Connection

## Activity #5

### Poet-Tree

Teaching students how to think, not what to think, about the environment.

In the activity Poet-Tree students are writing or analyzing poetry about the environment using various forms of poetry. A good Texas connection and bit of history or Texas Trivia is to have students use one of the many champion or historic trees in Texas as their topic. To get the status of champion a tree must have the greatest girth, spread and height. Many people tend to make the mistake that a large tree should be like a giant sequoia. The trees in Texas that are champion are known for their size compared to others in the same species. Many trees are champions because of their age. There are some trees in the state believed to be 1000 years old. The Texas A&M Forest Service keeps a big tree registry. If you want to have a tree recognized as the largest of its species, you will find a nomination form at their website.

To be a historic tree, a tree generally has played some part in the community. They could have been where church services, meetings, or political speeches have occurred. Some of the most famous trees are hanging trees. These were used by the local people to carry out their version of justice of the time.

In many communities when large old trees are threatened citizens will try to get them declared as historical. When this happens, the tree in question cannot be destroyed.

When historic trees are destroyed, it is a loss to the community. Some of the old trees have been downed by storms such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or from lightning strikes. There have been some that people have poisoned trying to kill them. The Treaty Oak in Austin met this fate. Great efforts were made to save it but they were to no avail. Seeds can be purchased from some of these historic trees and are often purchased as presents or remembrances for special events or people.

Every part of the state has a historic or champion tree. You can find one in your region to focus on!

#### Links

Texas Tree Trails

[http://  
www.texasretrails.org/](http://www.texasretrails.org/)

Texas A&M Forest Service  
Big Tree Registry

[http://  
txforests-service.tamu.edu/  
texasbigtreeregistry/](http://txforests-service.tamu.edu/texasbigtreeregistry/)