

October - Week 5

Images of a Spooky Season

As the temperature gets colder and the days get shorter, deciduous trees move nutrients down to their roots for winter storage and they sever ties with their leaves. As the leaves fall, branching patterns are exposed that were hidden by their leaves throughout the growing season.

Most leaves have fallen by the final week of October which includes a well-known holiday, Halloween. Spooky stories are often written and shared in books, TV shows and movies. Haunting scenes are often created in these stories that incorporate the images of the mighty oaks. Their large, thick branches are bent and shaped in a way that stands out from other deciduous tree branches in a woodland landscape.

Oak trees tend to grow best in sunny areas and along the edges of forests, not in the shaded understory of a forest or woodland. This allows them to stretch out their branches wider than other deciduous tree species that grow in Minnesota woodlands. Observe deciduous trees and their branching patterns. Can you identify oaks from the other deciduous species?

If you observe an oak tree, sketch it. Include sketches of other deciduous trees as a comparison. Label the trees by name if you are able to identify them. Add more oaks to your scene and write a spooky story in your journal. What will the title be? Is it *The Mystery of the Missing Acorn*? Share your story and pictures with others, possibly while sitting around a campfire.

