

Understanding Tree Rings:

The rings on a tree contain a lot of information. The key is knowing how to interpret what you see. The first thing to know is that counting the number of rings will help determine the age of the tree. As the tree grows it will create a record of the environmental conditions for that area. This record will include rainfall and temperature! By looking at the size of tree rings you can estimate rainfall. Larger tree rings indicate more rainfall and smaller tree rings show less rainfall.



Activity:

If you can find a tree stump, look at its tree rings. Remember the lighter, wider rings are when the tree grew quickly during the summer, and the darker, thinner rings are from when the tree grew more slowly. One dark ring and one light ring represents one year of growth. How old was the tree from the stump you found? Can you see any damage the tree has suffered? Use the measuring tape to measure the diameter or length of the stump. Be sure to record other observations of insect activity or mushroom growth!

