Summit Metro Parks
Tree Detective Service
Using A Dichotomous Key

1. Does it have NEEDLES?		
1a. Needles are LONG		Pine Tree
1a. Needles are SHORT	Go to 1b	
1b. Needles are SOFT		Fir Tree
1b. Needles are HARD and SHARP		Spruce Tree
1. Does it have BROAD LEAVES?	Go to 2	
2. The leaves are COMPOUND	Go to 2a	
2a. Leaves are PALMATELY compound		Buckeye or Horse Chestnut
2a. Leaves are PINNATELY compound		Tree of Heaven
2. The leaves are SIMPLE	Go to 2b	
2b. Leaves are OPPOSITE	Go to 3	
2b. Leaves are ALTERNATE	Go to 4	
3. Are the Leaves LOBED?		Maples
3. Leaves are NOT LOBED	Go to 3a	
3a. Leaves are HEART-SHAPED		Catalpa
3a. Leaves are ROUNDED		Dogwood
4. Leaves are DEEPLY LOBED	Go to 5 or 6	
4. Leaves are NOT DEEPLY LOBED	Go to 7	
5. Leaves are PALMATELY LOBED	Go to 5a	
5a. Leaves are STAR-SHAPED		Sweetgum
5a. Leaves are NOT star-shaped		Sycamore
6. Leaves are PINNATELY LOBED	Go to 6a	
6a. Leaves have more than 5 lobes		Oaks
6a. Leaves have 4 lobes		Tulip Poplar
7. Leaves are ELLIPTIC/OVATE		Cherry or Beech
7. Leaves are OVAL/TRIANGULAR		Aspen or Cottonwood

CLUES

Simple Pinnately Compound Palmately Compound

Alternate Opposite

Palmate Lobes Pinnate Lobes

Leaf shapes

Lobed Elliptic Linear Oval Obovate Ovate Lanceolate Oblong