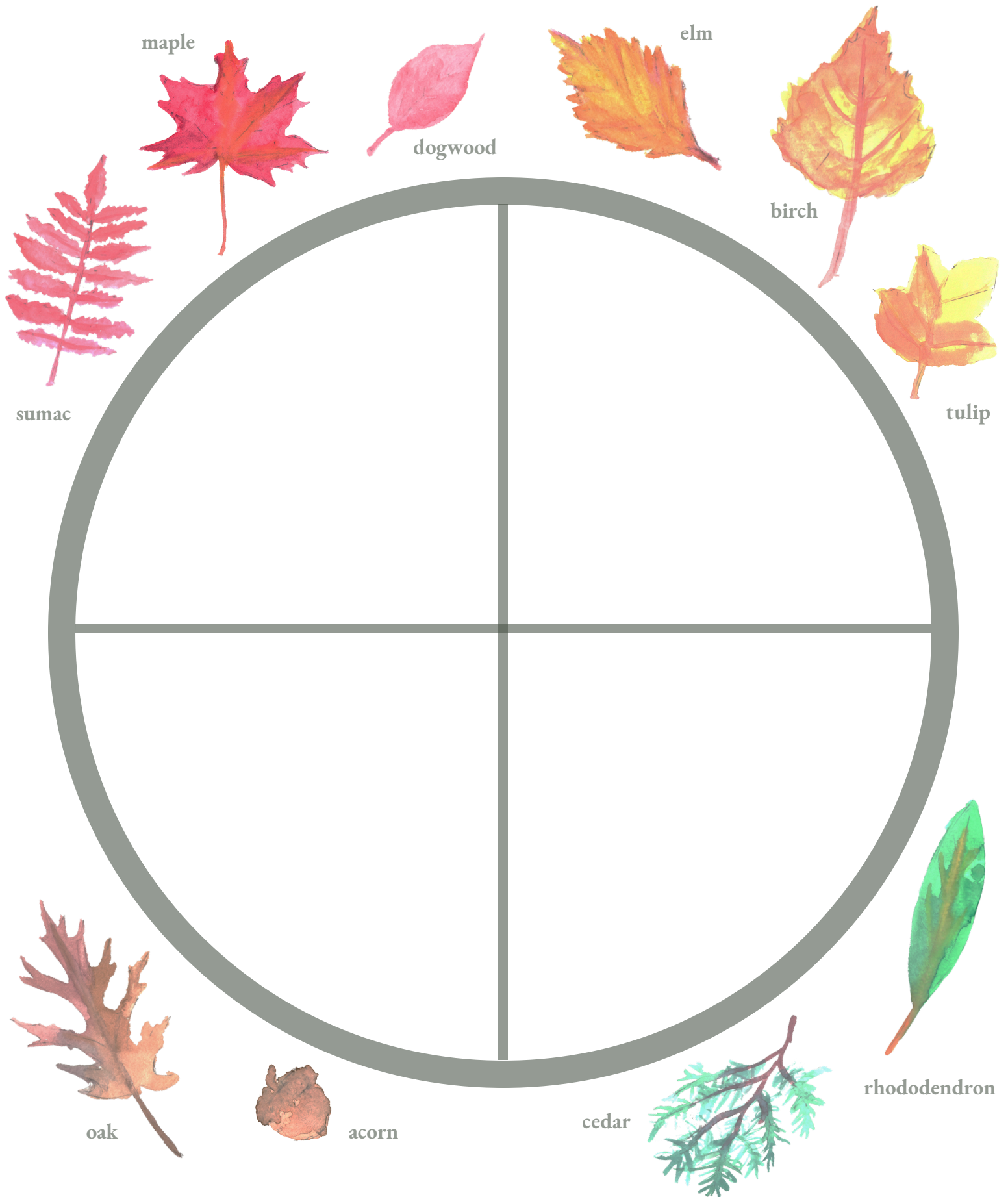


# FALL COLOR WHEEL



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## *Instructions*

Fall is a great time to introduce seasonal changes in nature to young explorers. Before you head outside to find items for your color wheel, ask them what they can see outside that tells them its Fall (leaves changing colors, animals foraging for food, neighbors chopping firewood, etc.)

Print out the fall color wheel and collect items from nature that are similar colors (red/orange/yellow/green/brown). Be careful not to collect anything endangered or poisonous!

Explain that each leaf actually has all of these colors, but the green color covers up the others in the summer. The green color is a pigment that uses sunlight to make food for the tree (a process called photosynthesis). In the fall, there is less sunlight to make food and the green color fades which allows the other colors to show. Less sunlight also means less food for the tree so the leaves dry out, their stem weakens and they fall to the ground. Trees that lose their leaves each winter are called "deciduous." The leaves of "evergreen" trees however, can stay green year-round because they can hold more water and don't dry out.

If you have older explorers joining you, you can tell them that the red pigment is called anthocyanin and its also what gives strawberries, apples, and cranberries their red hue. The orange color is carotenoid and is also found in carrots, daffodils and bananas. These other pigments also perform photosynthesis (but to a lesser extent than the green) and they take longer to break down which is why they are visible once the green fades.

## *Discussion Questions*

- What are some signs of Fall that you can see?
- Does your family have any special Fall rituals (e.g. play football, wear sweaters, make apple pie)?
- Did you find any leaves that look the ones around the color wheel?
- Did you find any evergreens today? How are the leaves different from the leaves of deciduous trees? (Evergreen leaves are often covered in a waxy coating to help them hold water)