

Old Neighbors and Newcomers

Some plants on our trail have lived in Cache Valley for a very long time. We call them old neighbors. Other plants came from far away. We call them newcomers.

Willows grow by the creek because they love water. Long ago, the Shoshone people named this valley Sihiviogoi. That means Willow River. They used willows to make baskets and to block the winter wind.

The Shoshone also picked chokecherries. They dried the dark berries to eat in winter. Never eat berries on the trail without an adult. The pits can make you sick.

Junipers are tough trees. They grow on dry, rocky hills. The juniper on our trail is about 200 years old! Birds eat its blue berries.

Milkweed is food for monarch butterflies. Baby monarchs, called caterpillars, eat only milkweed.

Old Neighbors

willow
chokecherry
Utah juniper
milkweed
big sagebrush
maple
aspen
cottonwood

Newcomers

sweet-briar rose
St. Lucie cherry
smooth brome

Trail Facts!

Aspen is Utah's state tree.

Aspens and cottonwoods are cousins. Both are poplars.

Sweet-briar rose leaves smell like apples!

A dead tree is a home for bugs and mushrooms.

Old Neighbors and Newcomers

MORE OLD NEIGHBORS

Big sagebrush is gray-green. Rub a leaf and smell your fingers!

Maple leaves turn red and orange in fall.

Aspen has white bark and leaves that shake in the wind. It is Utah's state tree.

Cottonwood is a kind of poplar. Its bark is dark and bumpy. Its leaves are long and skinny. Cottonwoods grow near water, just like willows. Aspens are poplars too, so they are cousins!

NEWCOMERS

Sweet-briar rose came from Europe. Rub a leaf. It smells like apples!

St. Lucie cherry came from Europe too. People used its roots to grow cherry trees. Some of it escaped and now grows wild.

Smooth brome is a grass. People planted it as food for cows.

A TREE THAT IS STILL WORKING

The old dead tree is not done yet! Bugs live inside it. Mushrooms grow on it.

Little by little, it turns into soil for new plants.

Words to Know

- caterpillar: a baby butterfly
- poplar: a tree family that includes aspens and cottonwoods
- soil: the dirt where plants grow



Back to your I Wonder foldable: Did this reading answer any of your questions? How can you tell if a plant is an old neighbor or a newcomer?