



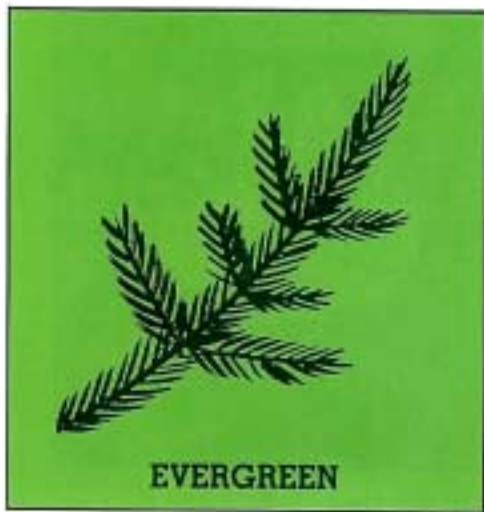
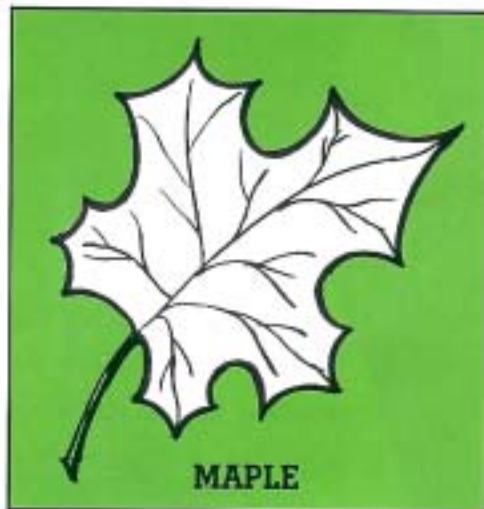
Nature

Fall Trees

by Rosanne Bane

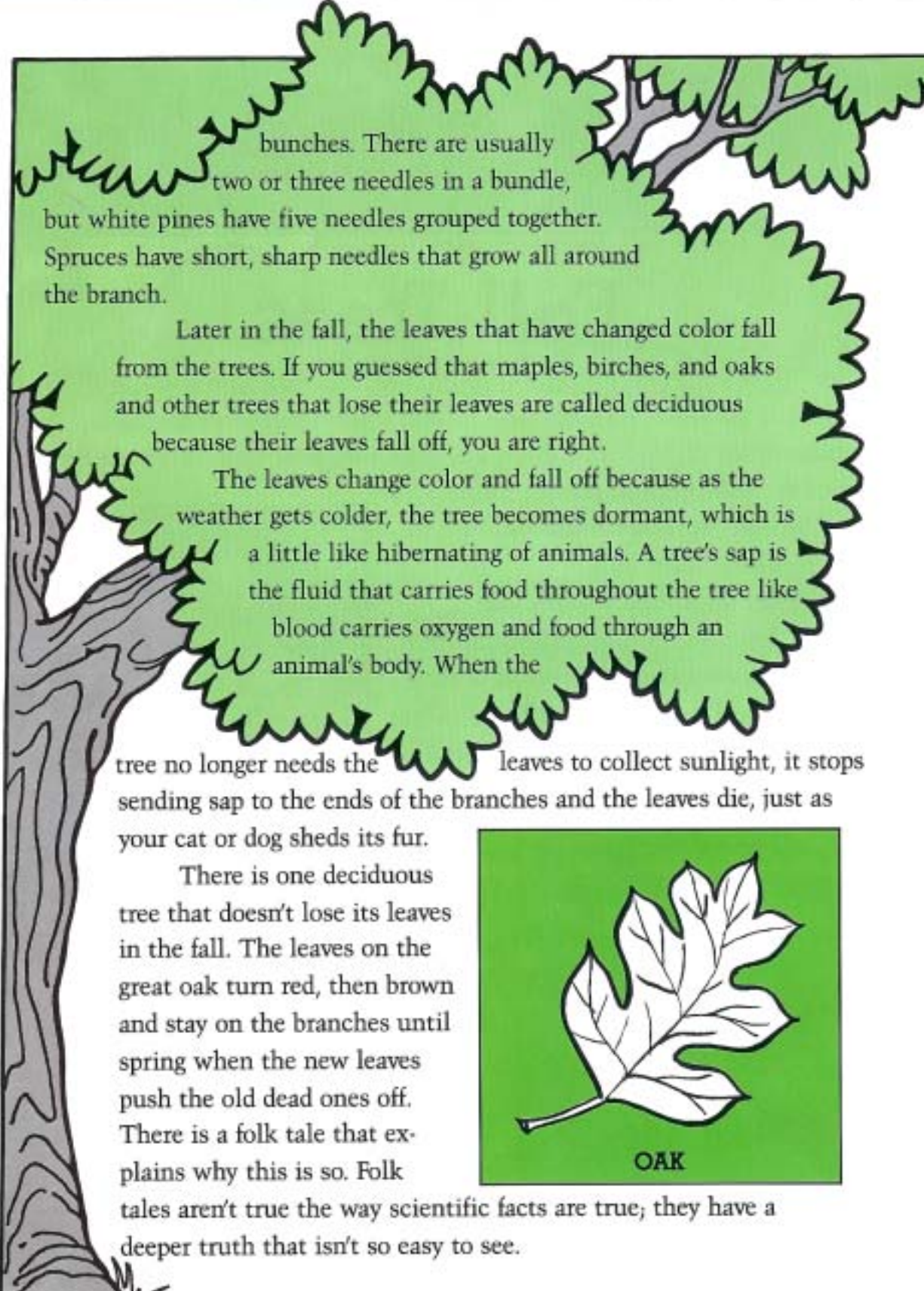
In the fall, the leaves on some trees change color. These trees are called deciduous, which means "to fall down." Can you guess why these trees are called deciduous? The leaves on maple trees become red; birches turn yellow, and oak trees turn red or brown.

Other trees, such as pines and spruces, are called evergreens because their leaves are always green. The leaves of these trees are usually very narrow and are called needles. You might have had this kind of tree in your house for Christmas.



Can you identify the trees by the color of their leaves? If you look closely, you'll notice that the shape of the leaf is often very similar to the shape of the tree.

It's not so easy to identify evergreen trees. Instead of looking at the color of the leaves, you have to look at the shape of the needles and how they are attached to the branches. Pine trees have long needles in



bunches. There are usually two or three needles in a bundle, but white pines have five needles grouped together. Spruces have short, sharp needles that grow all around the branch.

Later in the fall, the leaves that have changed color fall from the trees. If you guessed that maples, birches, and oaks and other trees that lose their leaves are called deciduous because their leaves fall off, you are right.

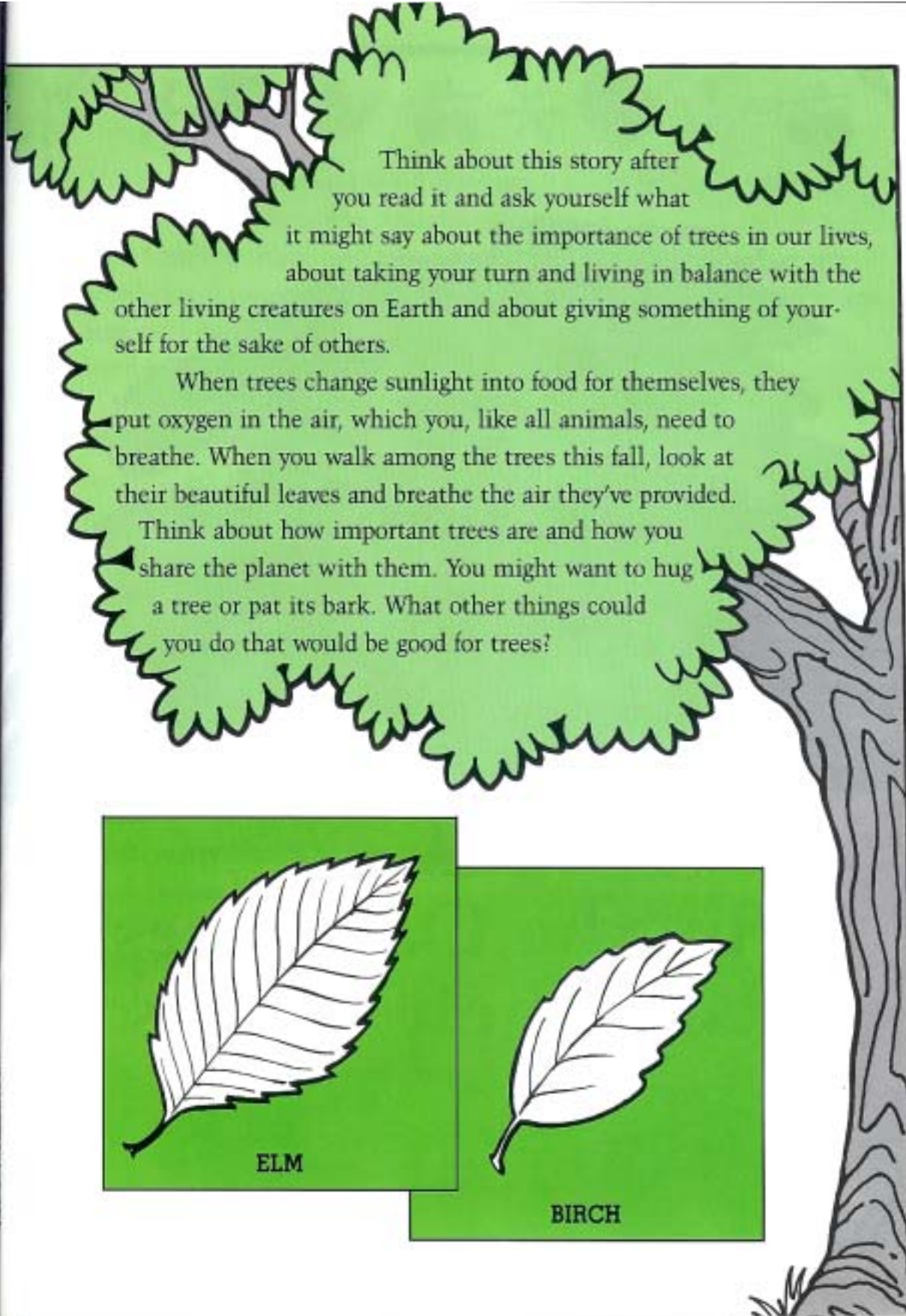
The leaves change color and fall off because as the weather gets colder, the tree becomes dormant, which is a little like hibernating of animals. A tree's sap is the fluid that carries food throughout the tree like blood carries oxygen and food through an animal's body. When the

tree no longer needs the leaves to collect sunlight, it stops sending sap to the ends of the branches and the leaves die, just as your cat or dog sheds its fur.

There is one deciduous tree that doesn't lose its leaves in the fall. The leaves on the great oak turn red, then brown and stay on the branches until spring when the new leaves push the old dead ones off. There is a folk tale that explains why this is so. Folk

tales aren't true the way scientific facts are true; they have a deeper truth that isn't so easy to see.





Think about this story after you read it and ask yourself what it might say about the importance of trees in our lives, about taking your turn and living in balance with the other living creatures on Earth and about giving something of yourself for the sake of others.

When trees change sunlight into food for themselves, they put oxygen in the air, which you, like all animals, need to breathe. When you walk among the trees this fall, look at their beautiful leaves and breathe the air they've provided.

Think about how important trees are and how you share the planet with them. You might want to hug a tree or pat its bark. What other things could you do that would be good for trees?



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