

Get Stumped!

Learn the age of a tree by counting the dark rings on the stump.



The rings are made each year when a new layer of wood grows underneath the bark. This new layer of wood is called the cambium layer.



The light portion of the ring is grown in the Spring when there is lots of moisture and the trees have energy to grow. If the conditions are good, the light ring will be wide. As the moisture declines through Summer and Fall the tree stops growing and this portion of the ring grows dark and thin.



The width and shape of the rings depend on the tree's access to resources like water and sunlight. If a tree has something pushed up against it, the lower side of the ring will be wider to create extra support. Major natural events such as fires, drought and insects will cause narrow rings because the tree will not grow as much during those periods.

Activity:

Draw your age in tree rings

How old are you? Draw that number of rings as the cross section of a tree!

Try drawing the age of your friends and family.

