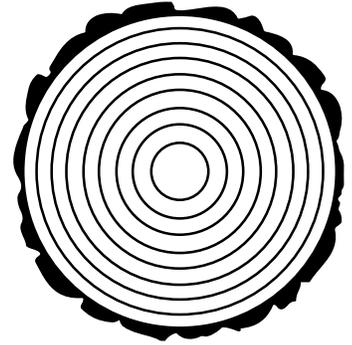


HOW OLD IS YOUR TREE COOKIE?

A tree cookie is a cross-section – or slice – of a tree or branch. By looking at a tree cookie, you can tell the age of the tree or branch and its growing conditions.

Every year, trees grow by adding a layer of new wood just under their bark. In a tree cookie, these layers look like circles, called **growth rings**. Each growth ring shows two colors of wood: a light-colored part added in spring when trees grow quickly, and a dark-colored part added in summer when trees grow slowly.

The width of growth rings can tell you about the growing conditions. For example, they are wider during wet years and narrower if the tree is stressed from drought, disease or insects.



Directions

- Count the growth rings on your tree cookie. (Hint: Count just the dark parts.) This is the age of the tree or branch when it was cut.

It was _____ years old.

- Sketch your tree cookie in the box to the right. In your sketch:

- Show the accurate number of growth rings.
- Choose one growth ring and label the lighter, spring-growth part and the darker, summer-growth part.
- Label the oldest growth ring and the youngest growth ring.

Questions

- Are all the growth rings in your tree cookie the same width, or do they vary?

- What does this tell you about the tree's growing conditions?
