MADE IN THE SHADE

Building houses requires lots of different materials, like wood for the floors, bricks for the walls, and glass for the windows. Have you thought about all of the things OUTSIDE your house that also help make it a home? Maybe you have a garden with flowers, a yard with grass, or trees in your neighborhood. Plants not only look pretty - they can also help the environment by conserving energy!

We can use trees and plants to help keep our homes cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Certain kinds of trees planted in specific locations will save the most energy. The cost of heating and cooling our homes can mean both literal cost, as in money, and the cost to the environment. Trees also shade patios, sidewalks, and driveways, cool the concrete, the entire yard, and even the neighborhood. In this activity, you can learn more about the trees in your own community and how they can benefit your home and neighborhood!

1 Find two different trees around your house or neighborhood and collect leaf samples from them.

2 Identify the tree where your leaf came from. There are several resources that can help you:

- The "What Tree Is That?" guide from The Arbor Day Foundation
- Leafsnap, a free app that identifies trees

3 Once you have identified your trees, gather the following information. You can visit www.arborday.org/trees to help with this!

- The name of the tree the leaf comes from.
- Two adjectives that describe the type of tree (for example, any tree will be either evergreen or deciduous).
- The mature height and lifespan of the tree (for example, fast growing with a short lifespan or slow growing with a long lifespan).
- Does this kind of tree grow well in your region?
- Does this kind of tree provide good shade and insulation from the wind?