



Osage Orange

“The Lord God caused every beautiful tree and every tree that was good for food to grow out of the ground...”

Genesis 2:9a (NCV)

Look up and talk about the following verses. How did people in the Bible use trees? You might need to read more of each passage to find out who is using wood and what they are building.

- Genesis 6:14–16
- Exodus 25:10–11
- 1 Kings 5:6–10
- Nehemiah 2:8



DO YOU ENJOY EATING ORANGES?

With their citrus smell and tasty juice, oranges are delicious! But there is a type of “orange” you don’t want to eat: Osage oranges. My family and I came across these this week while exploring the state of Missouri. Despite their name, Osage oranges are not oranges at all, but they are a type of fruit in the mulberry family. They are large, bumpy, hard, and bright green. They are tough to break open, but when we did, we discovered something very different from actual oranges inside.

Instead of plump packets of juice like in a real orange, an Osage orange is full of tiny seeds surrounded by a slimy white pulp. Not very tasty!



In fact, humans should not eat them (and wouldn’t want to, as they taste bitter). They can also cause skin irritation. Some animals, including squirrels, eat the seeds inside, but for the most part, these “oranges” are not used as food. So what is the Osage orange good for? The wood in an Osage orange tree is very beneficial. It is both beautiful and strong. Like its fruit, the wood is colorful. When freshly cut, the wood is bright yellow or orange. Over time, it darkens to brown but can keep beautiful bands of color. The wood is also durable and resists rot. It is used to make fence posts and tools, and is an excellent wood for making archery bows.

God made plants to help humans and animals. Some he made for food, others for joy through their beauty, and others for making things. What are some things made from tree wood that you use every day? God made humans smart and creative to use tree wood in many ways. Jesus himself was a carpenter, which means he made beautiful and functional things from wood. Can you imagine using something like a chair or table that was made by Jesus’s hands?