

HOW TO
DRAW &
PAINT

Trees

Learn to draw step by step



Studying tree and leaf shapes ■ Sketching on location
Creating a focal point ■ Developing branches

BY WILLIAM F. POWELL



Trees

The qualities we most admire in trees are also what we value in ourselves or other people—strength, dignity, and perseverance. Perhaps this is why we’re naturally drawn to them as artistic subjects. And because trees are everywhere, there are always plenty of available subjects to draw. From the initial blocking in of basic shapes to the addition of final details, this book teaches the step-by-step process of drawing a wide variety of trees. You’ll also learn about basic tree shapes and leaf types, as well as the fundamentals of shading, composition, and perspective. Inside you’ll find tips on drawing root patterns, branches, bark—even fallen trees—and simple techniques for rendering cast shadows and ground foliage. With just a little practice, you’ll soon be creating many different types of trees, each with its own unique qualities and elegance.

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Getting Started

Drawing is just like writing your name. You use lines to make shapes. In the art of drawing, you carry it a bit further, using shading techniques to create the illusion of three-dimensional form.

Only a few basic tools are needed to draw. All the tools necessary to create the drawings in this book are shown here.

Pencils

Pencils come in varying degrees of lead, from very soft to hard (e.g., 6B, 4B, 2B, and HB, respectively). Harder leads create lighter lines and are used to make preliminary sketches. Softer leads are usually used for shading.

Flat sketching pencils are very helpful; they can create wide or thin lines and even dots. Find one with a B lead, the degree of softness between HB and 2B.

Although pencil is the primary tool used for drawing, don't limit yourself. Try using charcoal, colored pencils, crayons, and pastels—they can add color and dimension to your work.

Paper

There are many types of paper that vary according to color, thickness, and surface quality (e.g., smooth or rough). Use a sketch pad or inexpensive bond paper for practice. For finer renderings, try illustration or bristol board. Bristol board is available in plate finish, which is smooth, or vellum finish, which has more tooth. As you become more comfortable with drawing techniques, experiment with better quality paper to see how it affects your work.

Erasers

Erasers not only help correct mistakes but also are fine drawing tools. Choose from several types: kneaded, vinyl, gum, or rubber, depending on how you want to use the eraser. For example, you can mold a kneaded eraser into a point or break off smaller pieces to lift out highlights or create texture. A gum or rubber eraser works well for large areas.

Other Helpful Materials

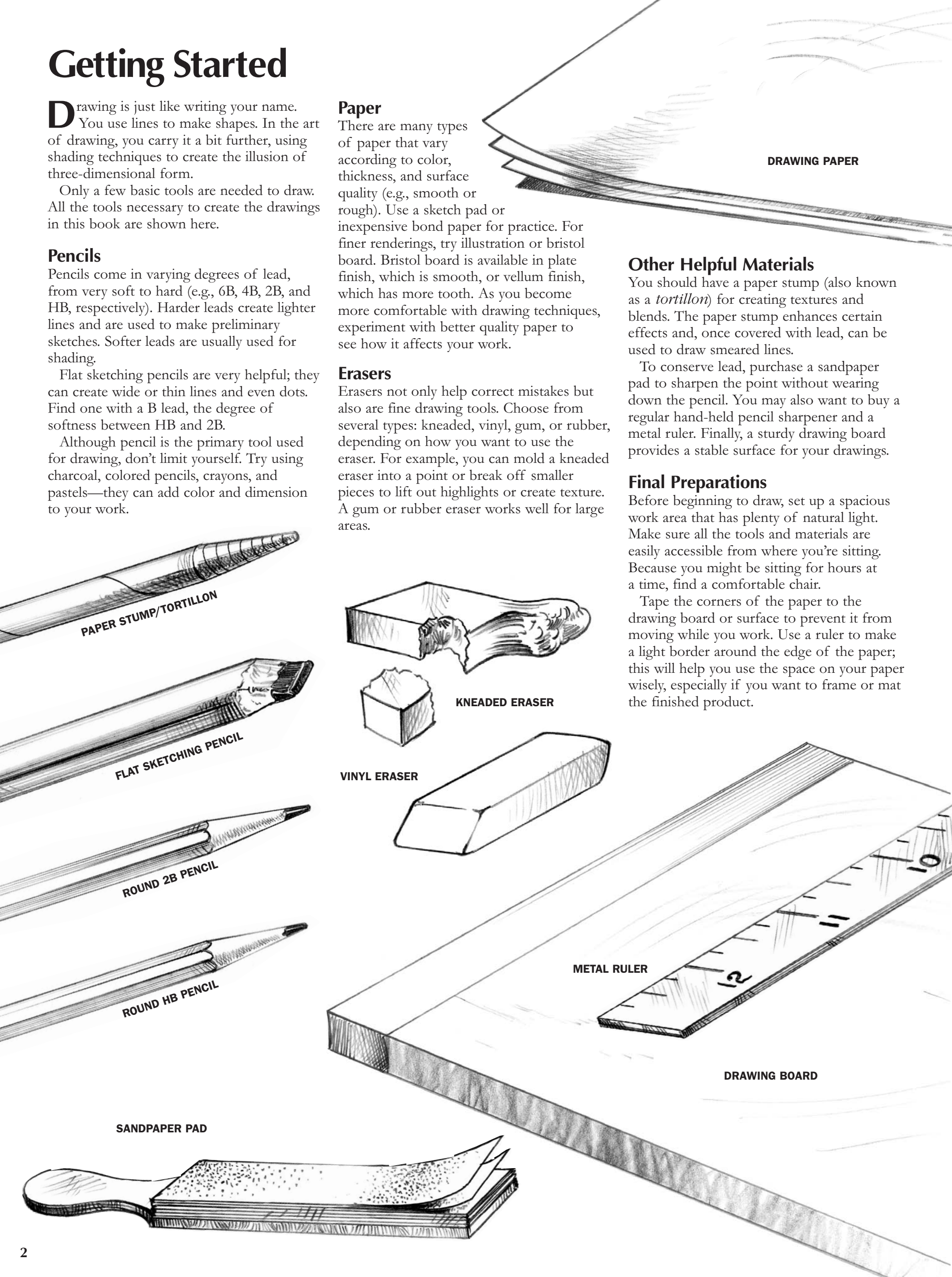
You should have a paper stump (also known as a *tortillon*) for creating textures and blends. The paper stump enhances certain effects and, once covered with lead, can be used to draw smeared lines.

To conserve lead, purchase a sandpaper pad to sharpen the point without wearing down the pencil. You may also want to buy a regular hand-held pencil sharpener and a metal ruler. Finally, a sturdy drawing board provides a stable surface for your drawings.

Final Preparations

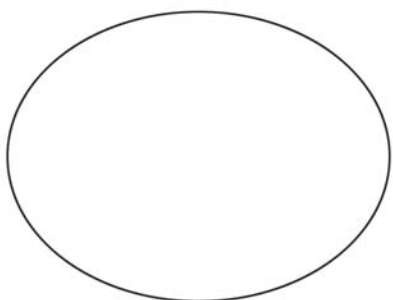
Before beginning to draw, set up a spacious work area that has plenty of natural light. Make sure all the tools and materials are easily accessible from where you're sitting. Because you might be sitting for hours at a time, find a comfortable chair.

Tape the corners of the paper to the drawing board or surface to prevent it from moving while you work. Use a ruler to make a light border around the edge of the paper; this will help you use the space on your paper wisely, especially if you want to frame or mat the finished product.

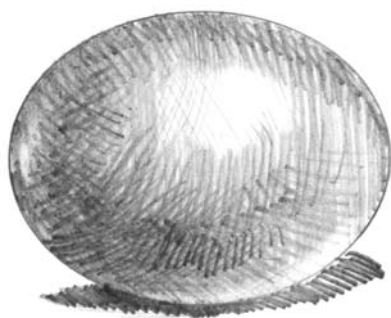


Shading Techniques

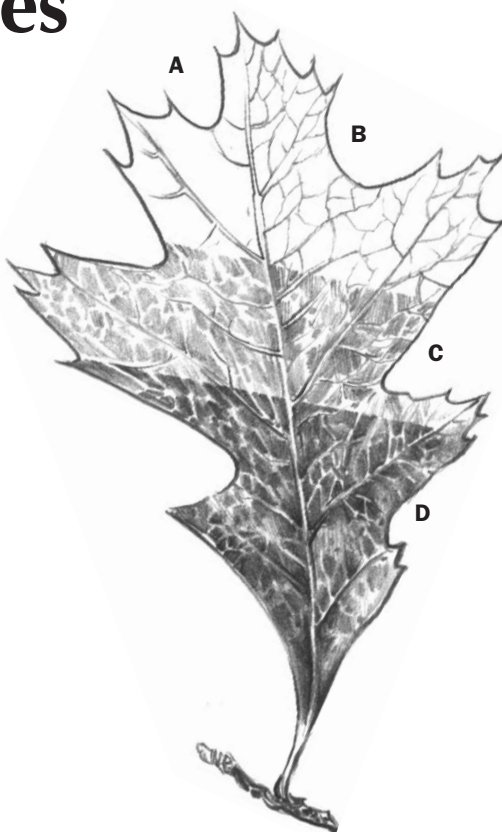
Shading enables you to transform mere lines and shapes in your drawing into three-dimensional objects. As you read this book, note how the words *shape* and *form* are used. Shape refers to the actual outline of an object, while form refers to its three-dimensional appearance. In the examples below, notice how shading builds up the object, creating the illusion of depth.



This is an oval *shape*.



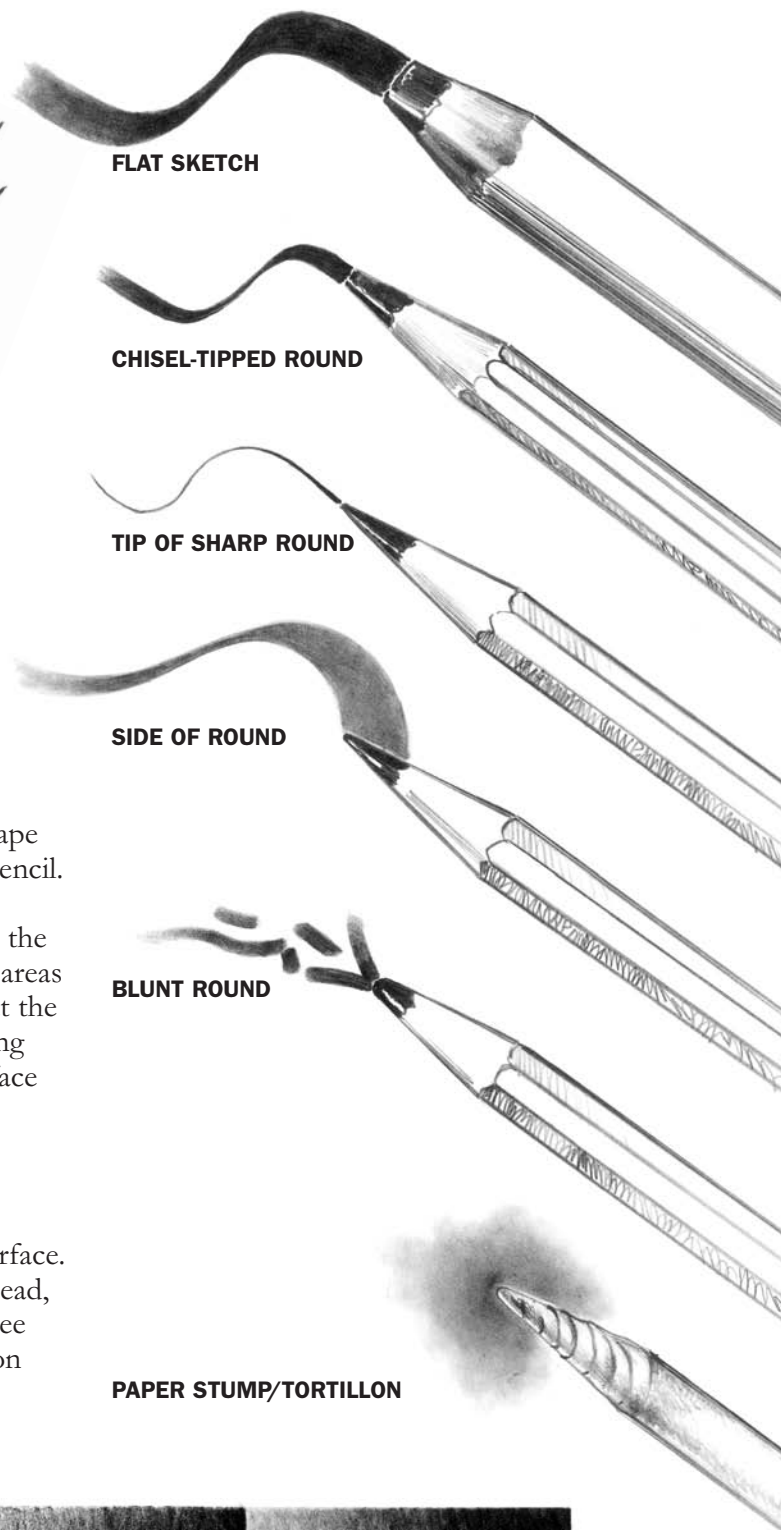
This has a three-dimensional, ball-like *form*.



(A) Begin by drawing the basic leaf shape and vein pattern using a pointed HB pencil. (B) Add more vein pattern. (C) Begin middle-value shading using the side of the lead. To create the vein patterns, leave areas clean or use a kneaded eraser to lift out the highlights. (D) Add darker shading using the point of a 2B pencil. Develop surface textures and detail.

Round pencils can be used with sharp, chiseled, and blunt points, and several techniques can be combined on one surface. The paper stump is used to smear the lead, making a blend softer. Experiment to see what kinds of textures you can create on your own.

Notice the different kind of line each type of drawing tool creates.



FLAT SKETCH

CHISEL-TIPPED ROUND

TIP OF SHARP ROUND

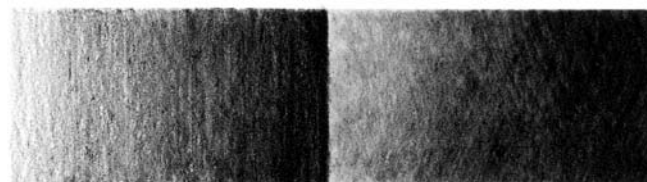
SIDE OF ROUND

BLUNT ROUND

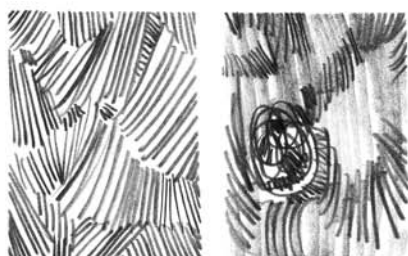
PAPER STUMP/TORTILLON



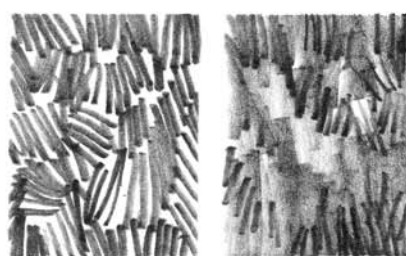
Make patterns such as the ones above using the side, blunt tip, and sharpened point of an HB pencil. Shade backgrounds first; then draw patterns over them. Pressing harder creates darker effects.



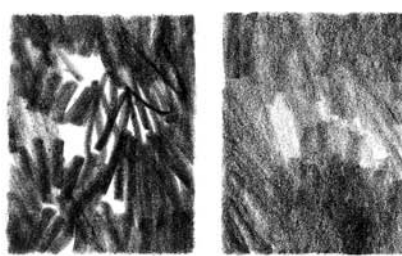
Gradual blends (above) can be created using the side of a 2B pencil. Shade in one direction to make the vertical finish on the left. On the right, see that two "blend angles" produce a smoother finish. Start lightly and increase pressure as you work toward the right.



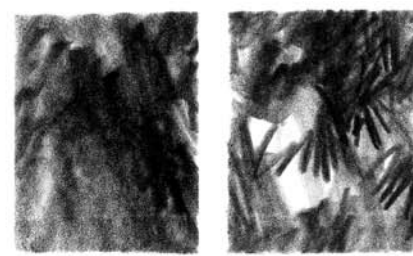
Left: Use a sharp-pointed HB pencil to draw this line pattern. **Right:** Shade a light background with a blunt-pointed HB pencil. Then use a sharp-pointed one to draw the darker, short lines over the background.



Left: Draw groups of randomly patterned lines using a blunt HB lead. **Right:** Use the side of an HB to shade the background, blend with a paper stump, and then add patterned lines over the background.



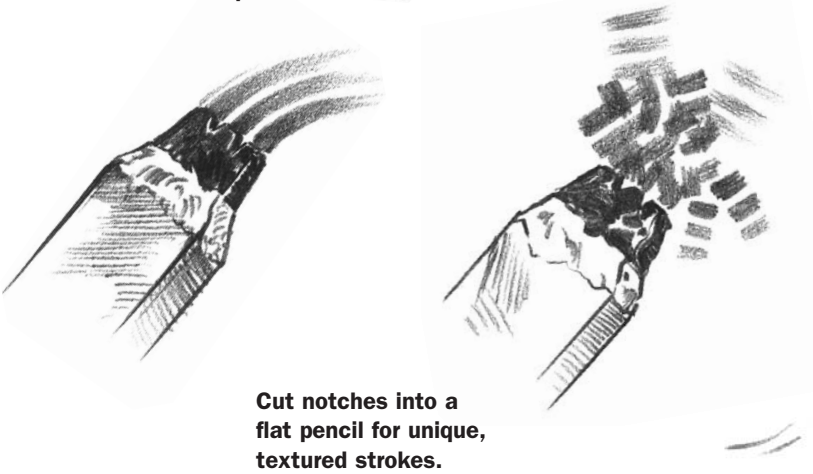
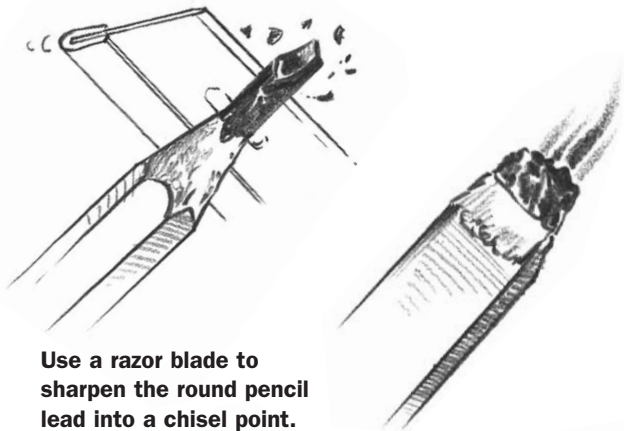
Left: Create blends and lines like these with a blunt-pointed 2B pencil. **Right:** Use the same technique as in the left example; then blend softly with your finger or a paper stump.



Left and right: Make lighter background shading using the side of a 2B. Then apply a little more pressure for the darker patterns, varying the direction of the strokes.

Surfaces & Textures

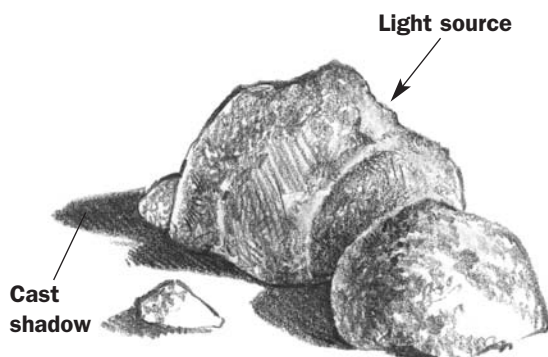
A variety of techniques can be used to render the surfaces and textures found in landscapes. Use a razor blade or knife to sharpen leads into chiseled, uneven, or jagged points; these points create unique lines, textures, and patterns. To vary the line thickness, try changing the direction of your strokes, as well as the angle at which you hold the pencil.



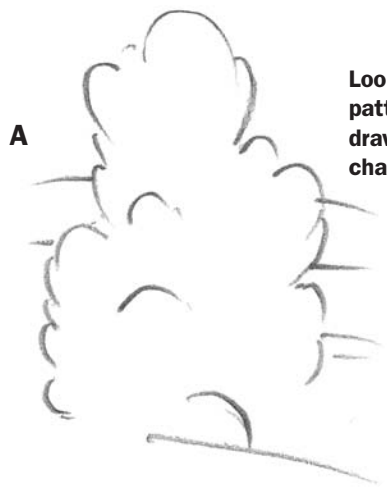
For the rocks below, sketch a preliminary outline. Then shade in various directions to bring out the rounded form and rugged texture. Don't forget the cast shadows; they appear on the opposite side of the rocks from where the light shines. Make the shadows the darkest, smoothest areas of your drawing.



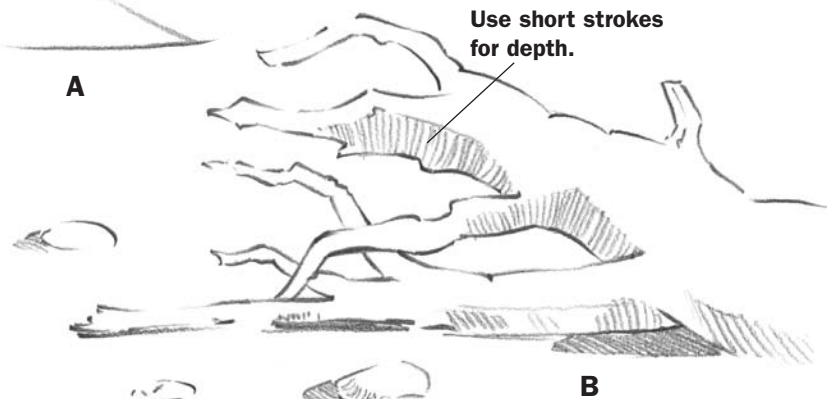
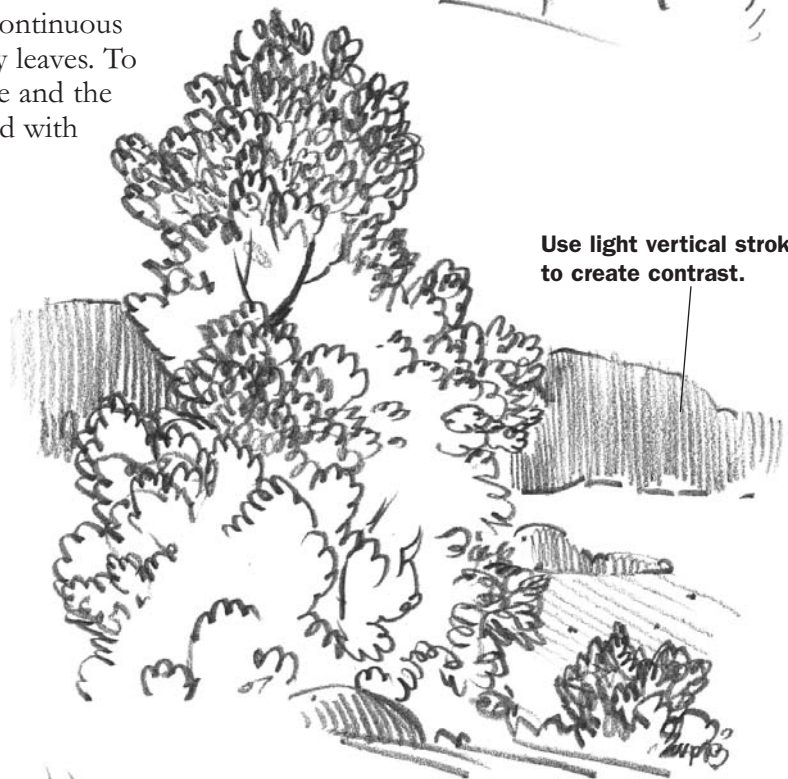
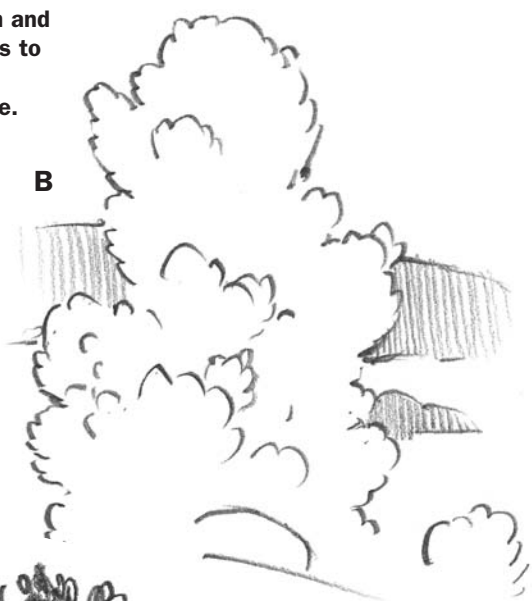
The higher the light source, the shorter the shadow will be; the lower the light source, the longer the shadow will be.



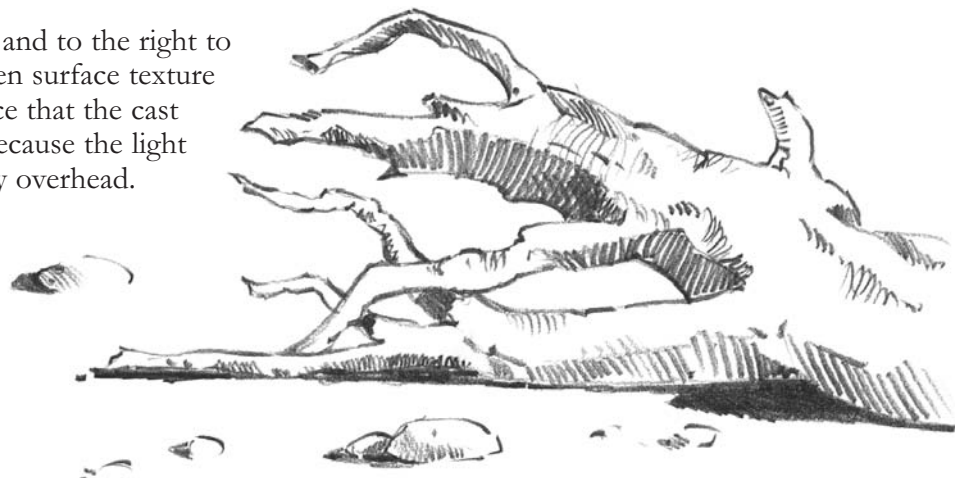
To create the bushy foliage shown here, use an HB pencil to draw a simple outline of the tree. Then sketch the smaller shapes within the foliage. In the final step, use continuous circular strokes to indicate the tiny leaves. To create contrast between the foliage and the background, shade the background with uniform vertical strokes.



Look at the position and pattern of the leaves to draw the general character of the tree.

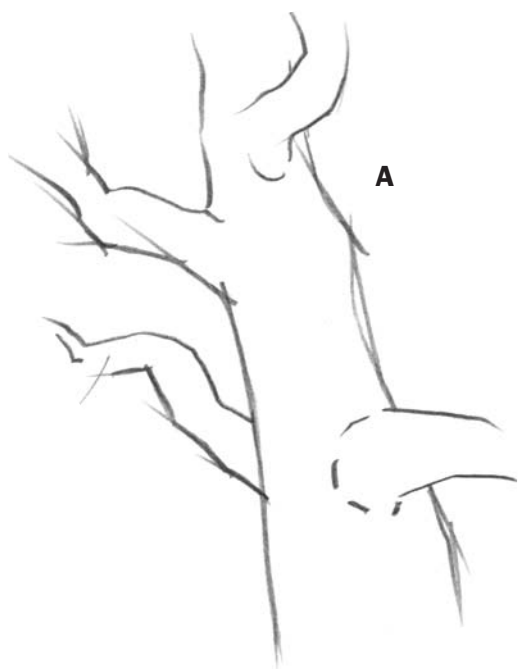


Follow the steps above and to the right to render the rough, uneven surface texture of the fallen tree. Notice that the cast shadow is less visible because the light source is almost directly overhead.



The Importance of Values

The term *value* refers to the relative lightness or darkness of a color or of black. Values are important in both painting and drawing because the variation among lights and darks creates the illusion of form. In pencil drawing, the shape of the subject dictates where to place the values to create the form. Note: If an area is made too dark, it could stand out from all other elements and seem out of place. Notice how the use of value differences in the tree trunk to the right suggests the trunk's texture.



As shown in step A, begin the trunk with a simple line drawing using the blunt point of an HB pencil. In step B, begin shading the middle values with the side of the HB. Finally, continue by shading the darker values to bring out the roundness, the grooves in the bark, and the twisting branches. Leave some areas white to represent sunlight on the trunk and branches.



In the landscape below, the tree at the right contains a number of value changes, giving an illusion of form and depth. The lighter tree at the left contains less subtle value changes. Value differences are also used to place objects on different planes—that is, the darker objects appear closer to the viewer, while the lighter objects appear more distant. In this drawing, lighter values are used to indicate that the pine trees are far away. Conversely, if the foreground elements were light, the background elements would be dark (see page 31).

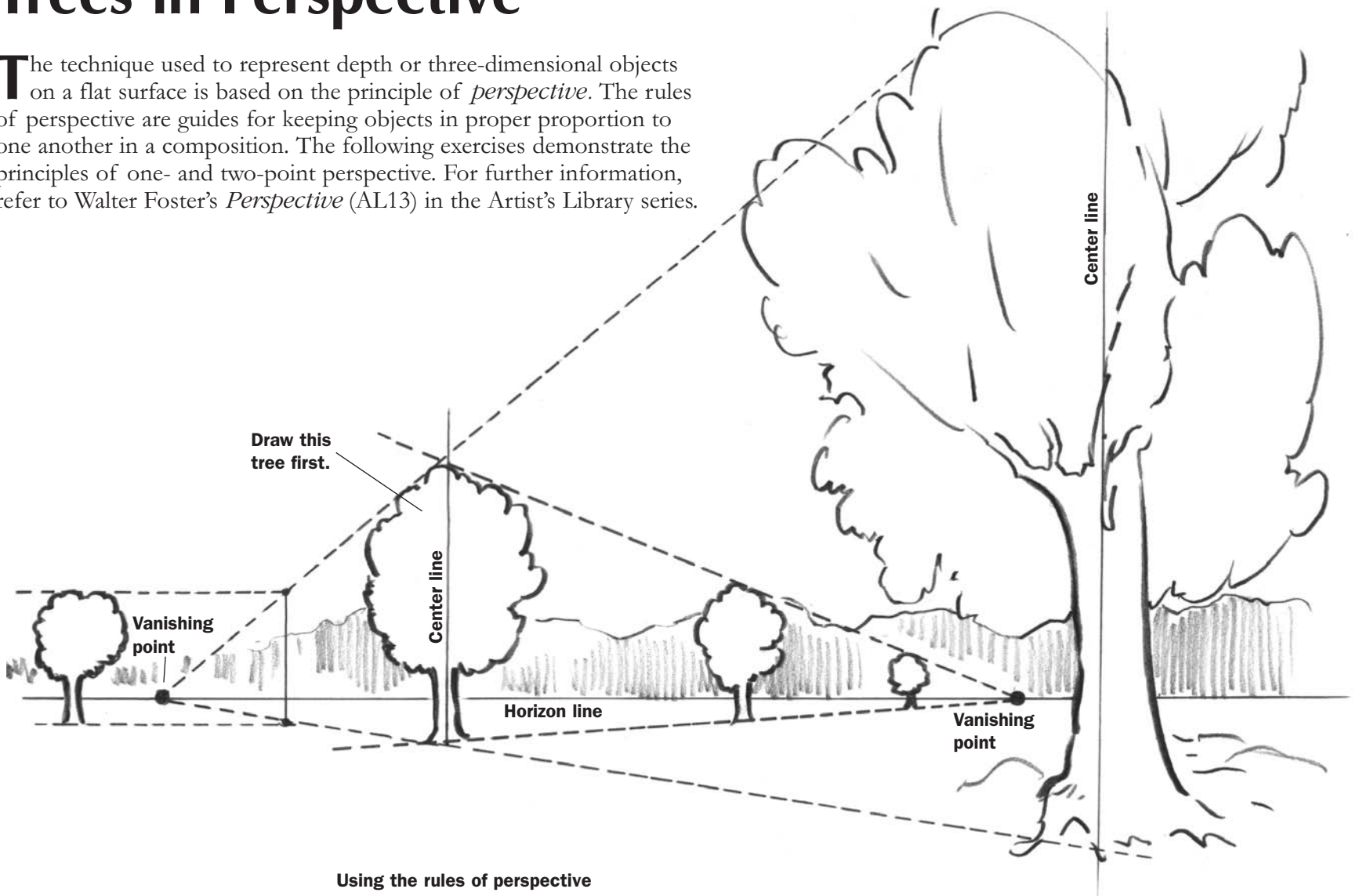
It's not necessary to draw every single leaf for an effective tree rendering. In this technique, most leaves can be suggested through simple outlines and shading.

Light values make this tree seem far away.



Trees in Perspective

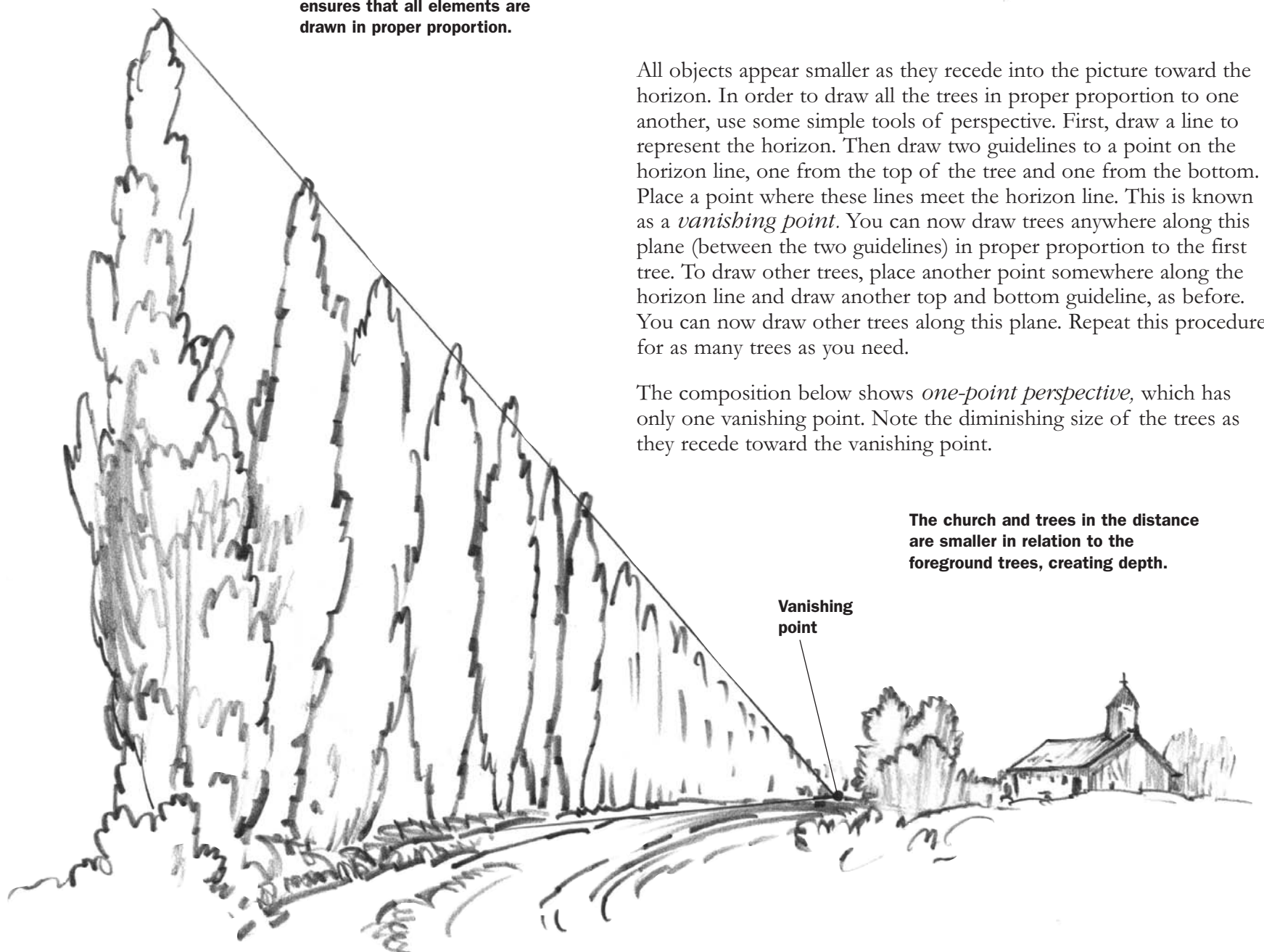
The technique used to represent depth or three-dimensional objects on a flat surface is based on the principle of *perspective*. The rules of perspective are guides for keeping objects in proper proportion to one another in a composition. The following exercises demonstrate the principles of one- and two-point perspective. For further information, refer to Walter Foster's *Perspective* (AL13) in the Artist's Library series.



Using the rules of perspective ensures that all elements are drawn in proper proportion.

All objects appear smaller as they recede into the picture toward the horizon. In order to draw all the trees in proper proportion to one another, use some simple tools of perspective. First, draw a line to represent the horizon. Then draw two guidelines to a point on the horizon line, one from the top of the tree and one from the bottom. Place a point where these lines meet the horizon line. This is known as a *vanishing point*. You can now draw trees anywhere along this plane (between the two guidelines) in proper proportion to the first tree. To draw other trees, place another point somewhere along the horizon line and draw another top and bottom guideline, as before. You can now draw other trees along this plane. Repeat this procedure for as many trees as you need.

The composition below shows *one-point perspective*, which has only one vanishing point. Note the diminishing size of the trees as they recede toward the vanishing point.

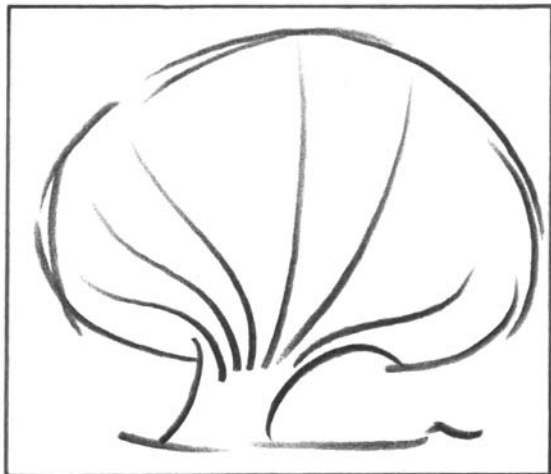


The church and trees in the distance are smaller in relation to the foreground trees, creating depth.

Pictorial Composition

When drawing, be sure to arrange the elements in a way that creates a pleasing design, or *composition*. The overall design is determined by the placement of different shapes and lines. The composition should direct the viewer's attention to the most important area of the drawing.

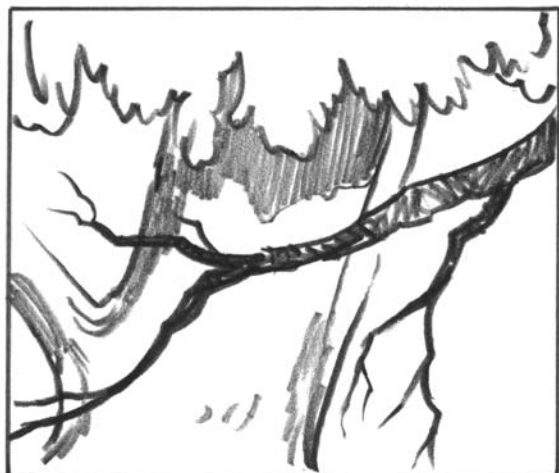
In the example below, the fanlike shape of the treetop draws the eye to the trunk area.



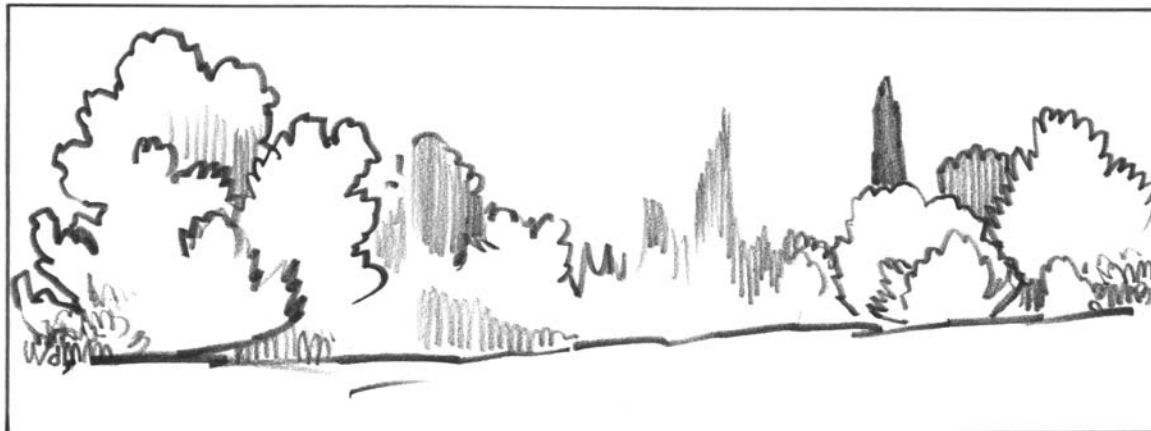
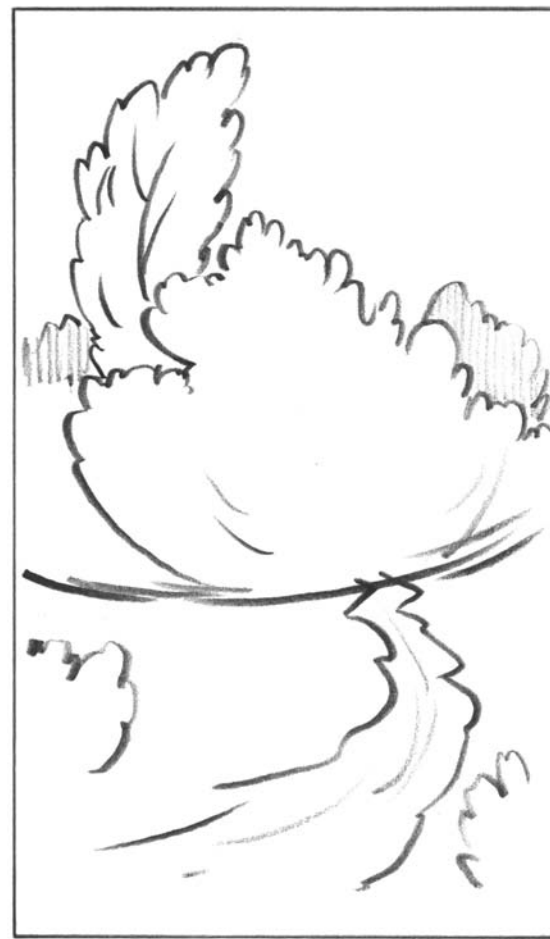
Below, the tree to the left is in the *foreground*, the area that appears closest in distance. The vertical direction of the trunk is subdued by the rounded foliage mass in the upper left corner. Balance is achieved by placing the shrub in the background and to the right. The *background* is the area of the scene that is farthest away.



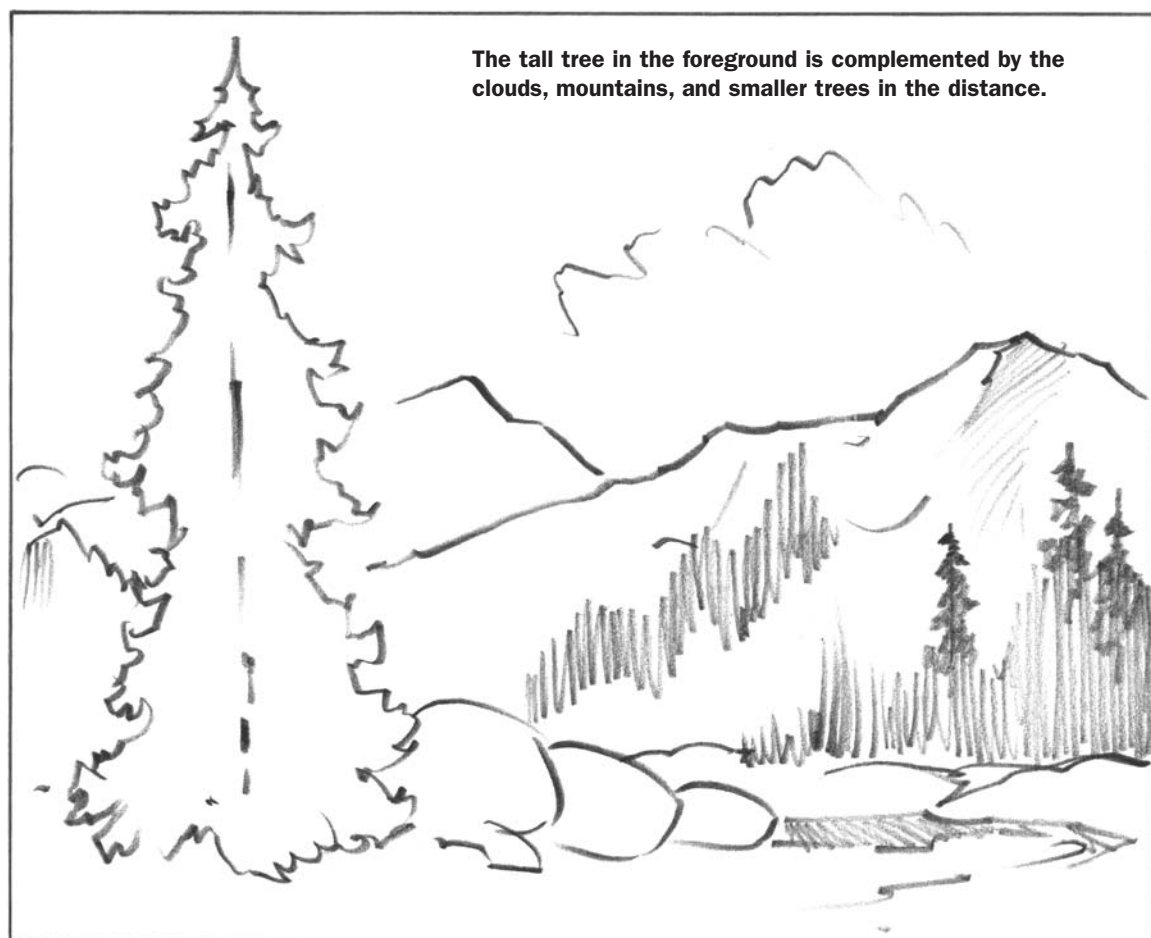
As shown below, a close-up of a tree can look very dramatic. Balance is achieved with opposing lines, which also lead the eye through the picture.



In the square composition below, the opposing lines of the branches create a focal point for the tree. (Try not to place the point of interest in the direct center.) The portrait (vertical) example to the right shows flowing lines, producing rhythm and balance.



The landscape (horizontal) composition above represents a panoramic view. The large trees on the left are balanced by a group of smaller trees on the right. By placing the major elements on the right and left sides of the drawing, the center appears serene.



The tall tree in the foreground is complemented by the clouds, mountains, and smaller trees in the distance.

Sketches & Notes

Because many species of trees look similar, the best way to tell them apart is to draw them. Carefully observe and then sketch the distinctive shapes and characteristics of different trees. Make notes about your observations to trigger your memory when using the sketches for reference in the future.

To help with your sketches, create a personal reference library by collecting pictures of trees from guidebooks or nature magazines. This reference collection is commonly called an *artist's morgue*.



Clusters of five needles



SUGAR PINE
(200 to 220 feet high)



No bark

Bark



WHITE BIRCH

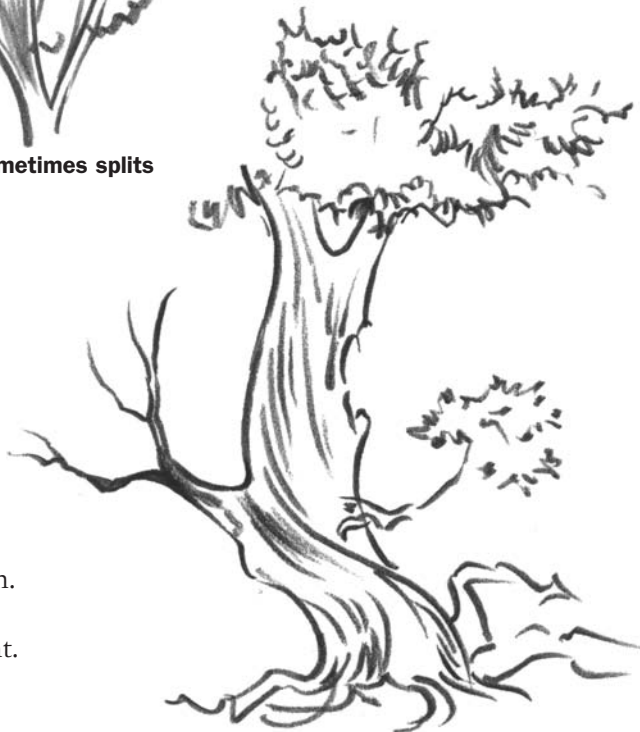
Light, cream-colored bark



Trunk sometimes splits



Basic leaf shape



TWISTED WHITE PINE

In your sketch pad, describe or render details such as bark texture, leaf patterns, needle shapes, trunk formations, and other items on or around the tree. Make your drawings and notes detailed enough to properly record the subject.

Drawing from books and magazines is a valuable exercise, but you will also find it helpful to explore scenic areas on your own. Carry a sketch pad and pencil, and draw a variety of trees in their natural environment.



Lightly suggest background.

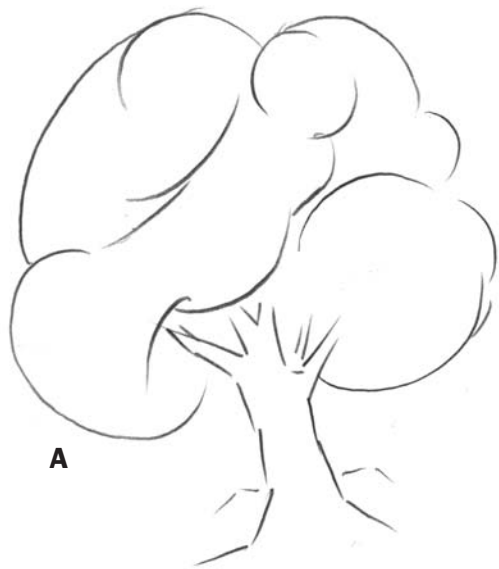


Make strokes that follow the shape of each trunk.

BEECH TREE

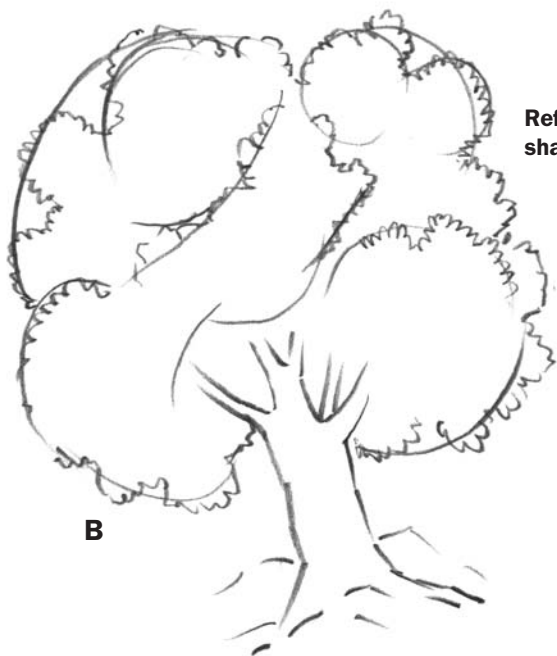
Begin With Simple Shapes

As you draw trees either from this book or outdoors, first work out the basic shapes with simple line drawings. For example, this tree is loosely sketched with straight lines for the trunk and branches and with curved lines for large groups of leaves.



A

Block in basic shapes.



B

Refine the shapes.

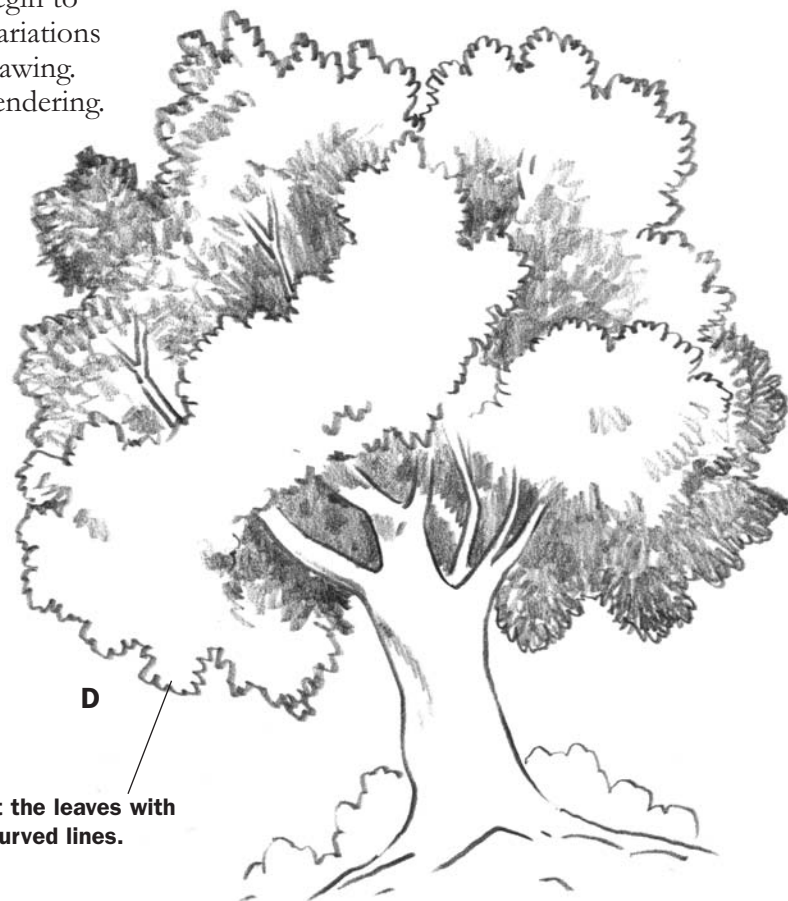
Make light, sketchy lines with the side of the lead.

In step A, sketch the basic shapes using the tip of an HB pencil. In step B, begin to refine the shapes. As shown in step C, use a 2B pencil to shade the dark areas behind the branches, creating depth. Then in step D, continue adding darker values and begin to suggest the leaves. Notice how the variations of values create depth in the final drawing. Add landscape details to finish the rendering.

Add darker values.



C



D

Suggest the leaves with small, curved lines.

Landscape elements make the tree look firmly planted.

Tree Shapes

Tree shapes vary tremendously. Some are tall and thin, while others are short and wide. To provide an authentic quality to your drawings, you must render the many subtle differences—especially among tree families. Each tree has its own characteristics and structural growth pattern. Study the different tree shapes on this and the next three pages.

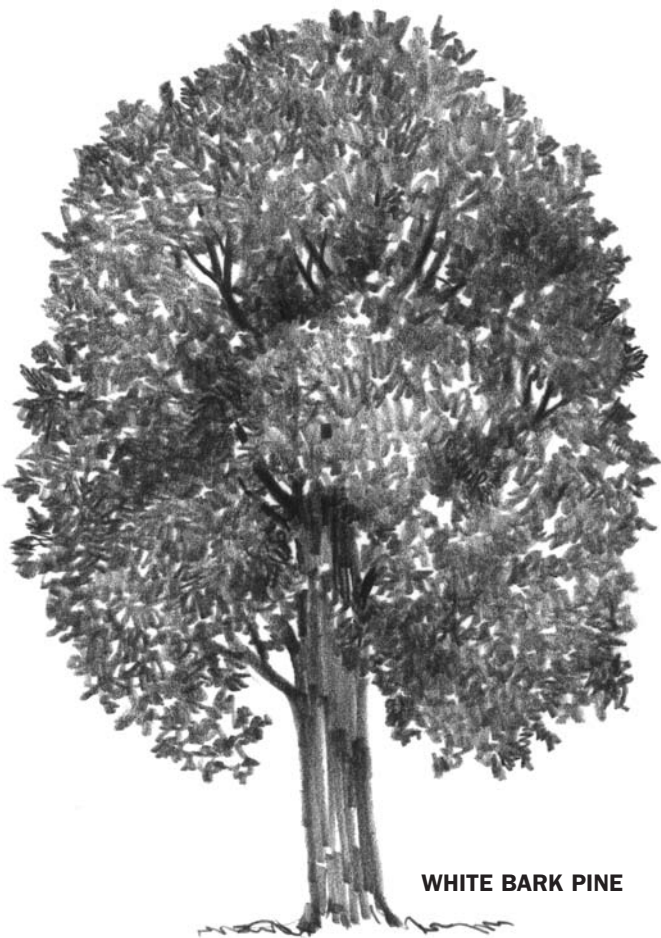
Pine trees are evergreens, which have needlelike leaves and produce cones (*coniferous*). The pine tree family has many species—such as hemlocks, spruce, and firs—which have different shapes and textures. Adapt your lines and shading to portray the various types.



GIANT SEQUOIA



BISHOP PINE



WHITE BARK PINE

First study the tree you want to draw, and mentally break it down into basic shapes. For instance, the mountain hemlock can be drawn from a triangular shape, while the bishop pine consists of oval shapes. Use an HB pencil to outline the tree and render the middle values. Switch to a 2B pencil for the darker areas.



RED FIR



MOUNTAIN HEMLOCK



PONDEROSA PINE

Broad-leaved trees—such as beeches, maples, and some oaks—have broad, flat leaves, produce flowers, and shed leaves every fall (*deciduous*). Study the subtle variations of shapes shown in these examples.

As you draw, notice the different techniques used for the leaves on each tree. First sketch the trunk, and then draw the general shape of the whole group of leaves before shading the foliage.



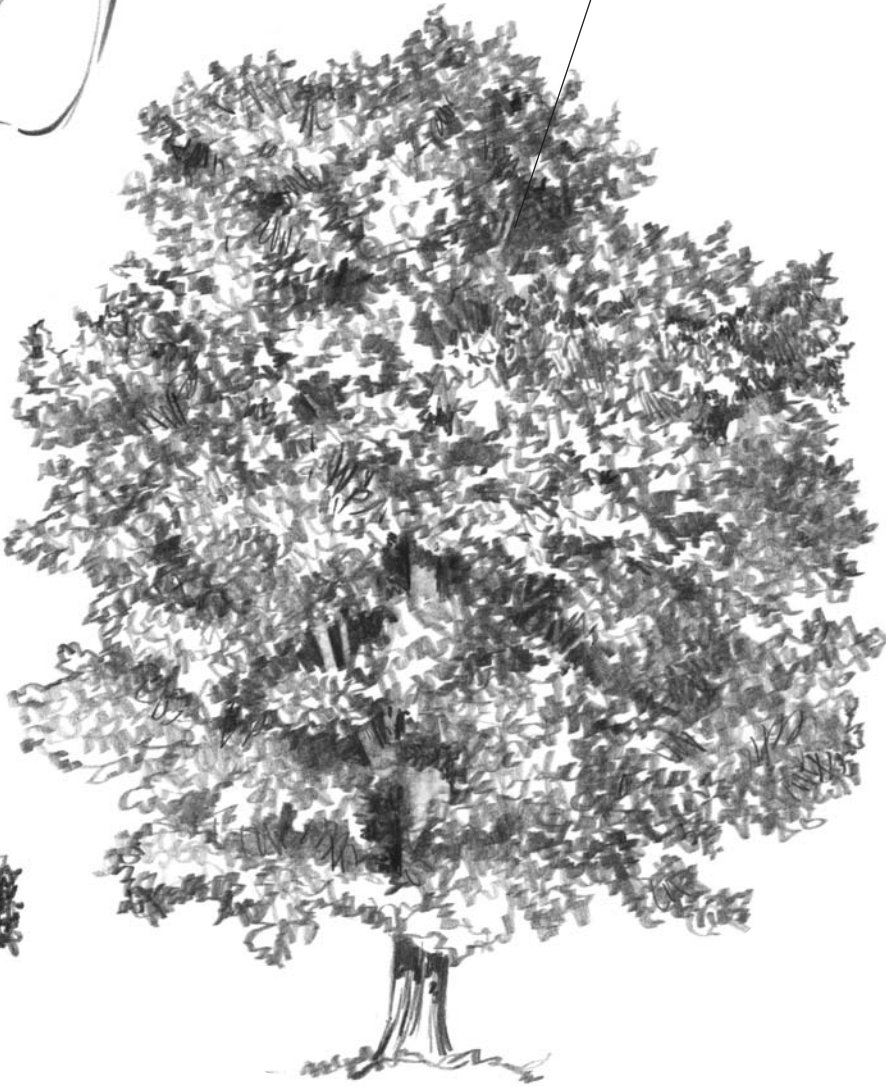
Variations of value create the thick, dense foliage of the red maple.



Use the side of the pencil lead for the basic layout sketches.

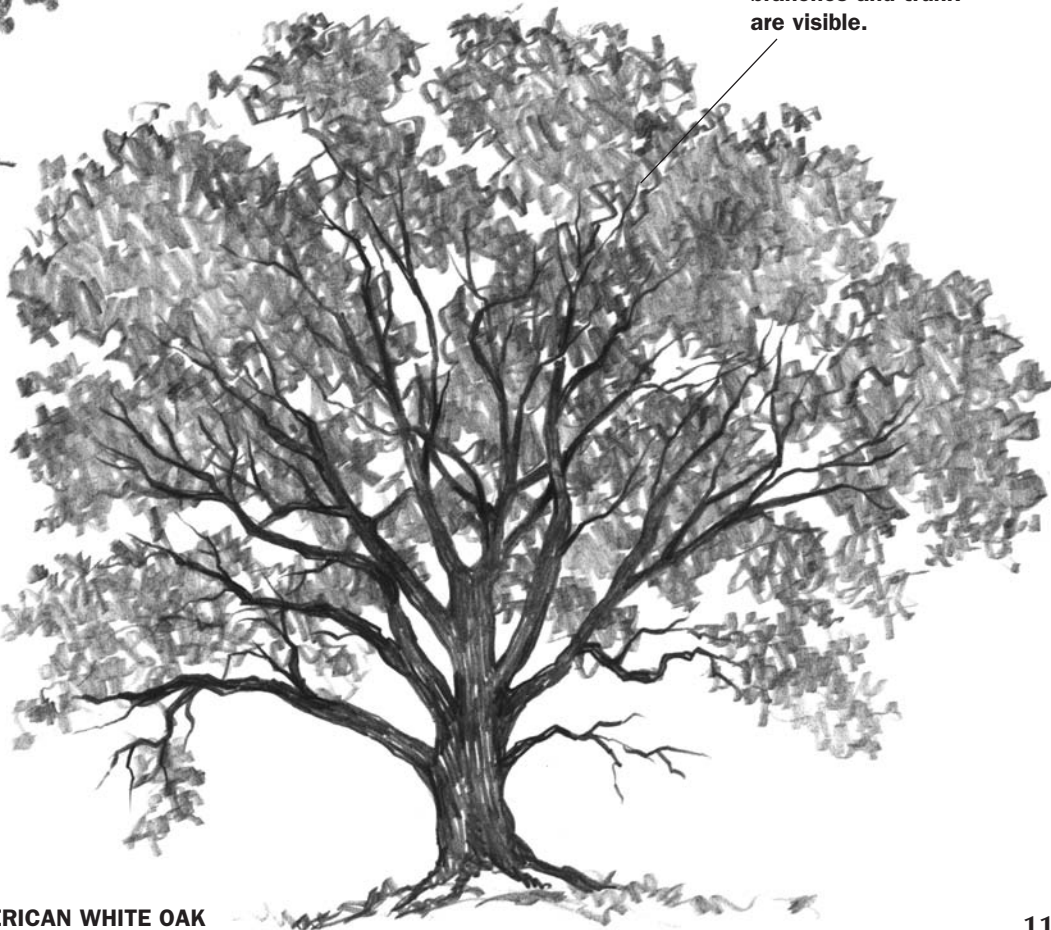


ALDER



RED MAPLE

Here the foliage is less dense, and the branches and trunk are visible.



AMERICAN WHITE OAK

A variety of tree families is represented on these pages. Notice the difference in shapes and textures between the trunks and leaves.

You will need a round HB and flat sketch pencils to draw these trees. Refer to the small layout sketches to lightly block in the guidelines. Experiment with a variety of strokes to develop the unique appearance of each tree.

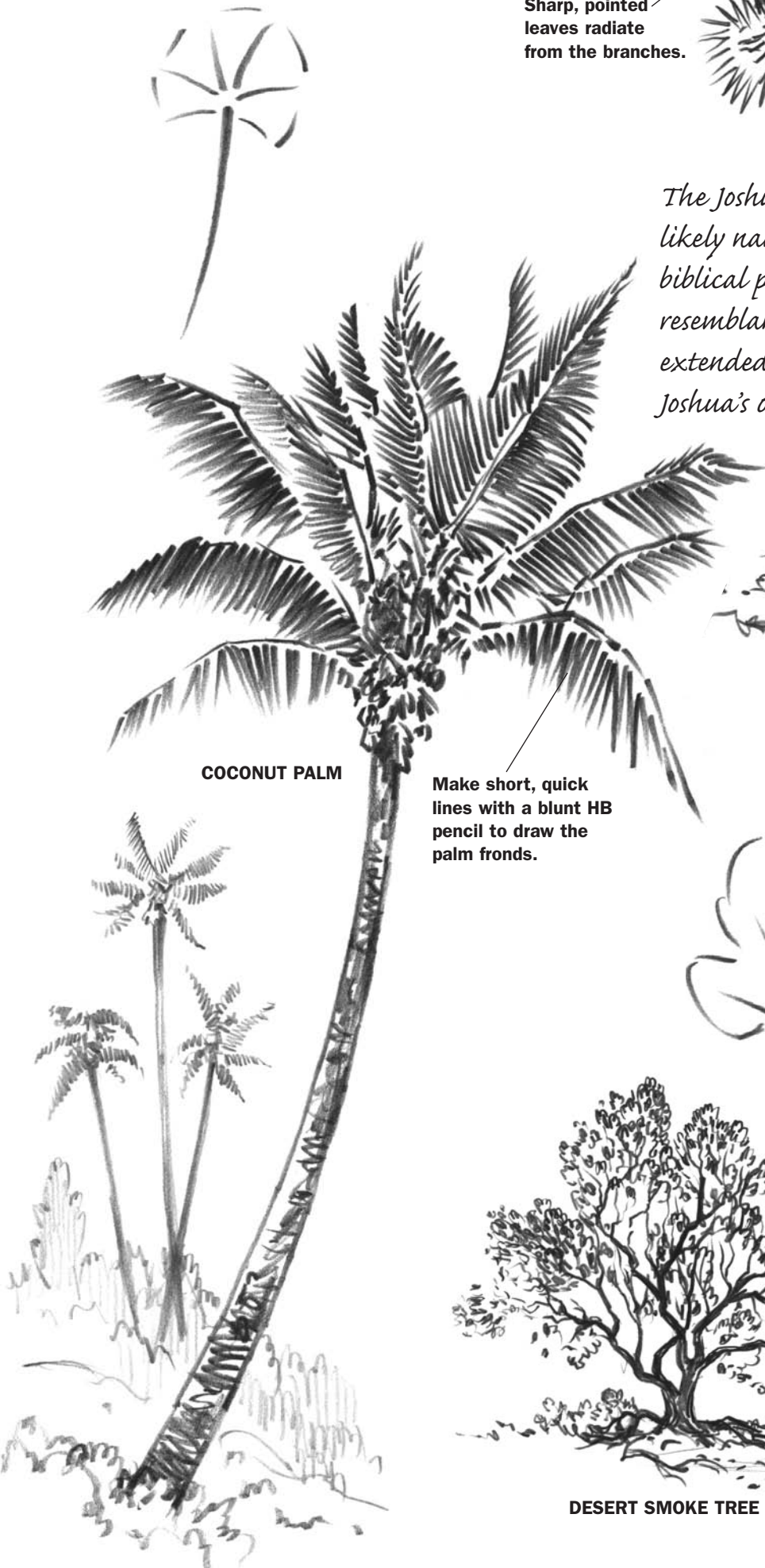


Sharp, pointed leaves radiate from the branches.

Use short, thick strokes to create texture on the trunk and branches.

The Joshua tree is most likely named after the biblical patriarch, given the resemblance of the tree's extended branches to Joshua's outstretched arms.

JOSHUA TREE



COCONUT PALM

Make short, quick lines with a blunt HB pencil to draw the palm fronds.



DESERT SMOKE TREE



AMERICAN ELM



The trunk is sometimes split.

Study the sketch of the tree you wish to draw. Block in the basic shape with the side of the pencil lead, keeping the lines simple and smooth. Then add any unique features, such as a stray, leafless branch or small clusters of foliage. To create texture, try changing the direction of your strokes, as well as the angle at which you hold the pencil.

**MONTEREY
CYPRESS**

Use bold lines to draw the Monterey cypress and thin, delicate strokes for the weeping willow.

WEeping WILLOW

**LOMBARDY
POPLAR**

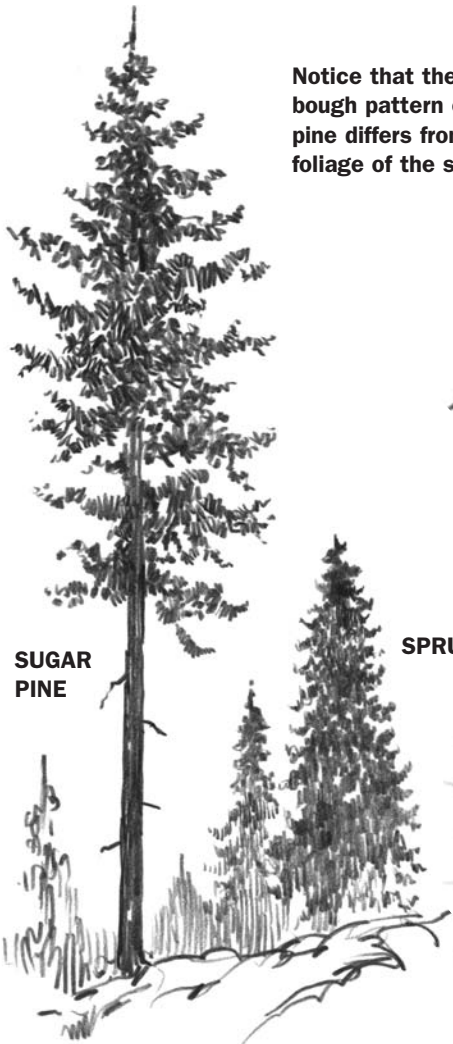
Bristlecone pines are among the oldest living trees. Some are believed to be more than 4500 years old.

**BRISTLECONE
PINE**

Use the sharp point of an HB pencil to draw the needles. Dark variations should be applied using the side of a 2B pencil.

Bough & Foliage Shapes

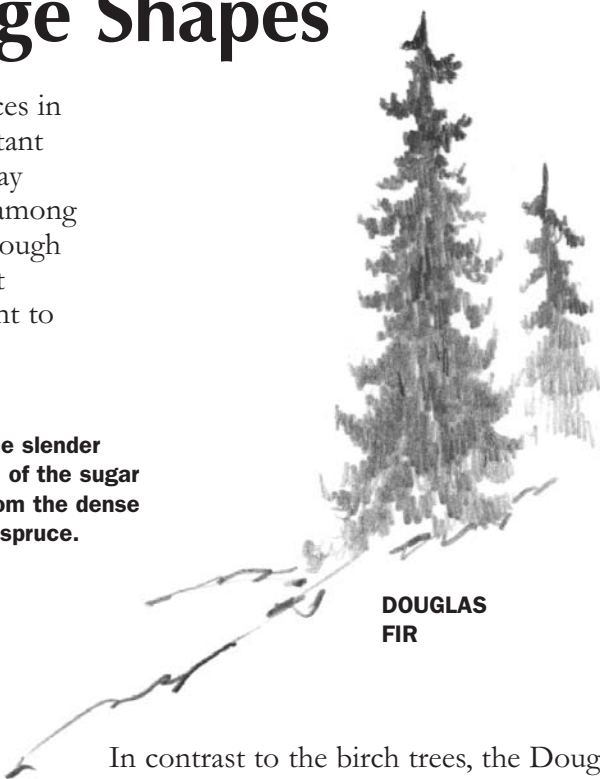
Like differences in tree shape, differences in bough and foliage shapes are important for illustrating a tree's distinctiveness. Pay close attention to the subtle variations among different tree types. Combinations of bough shapes make up a tree's mass, and slight differences in these shapes are important to the tree's character.



SUGAR PINE

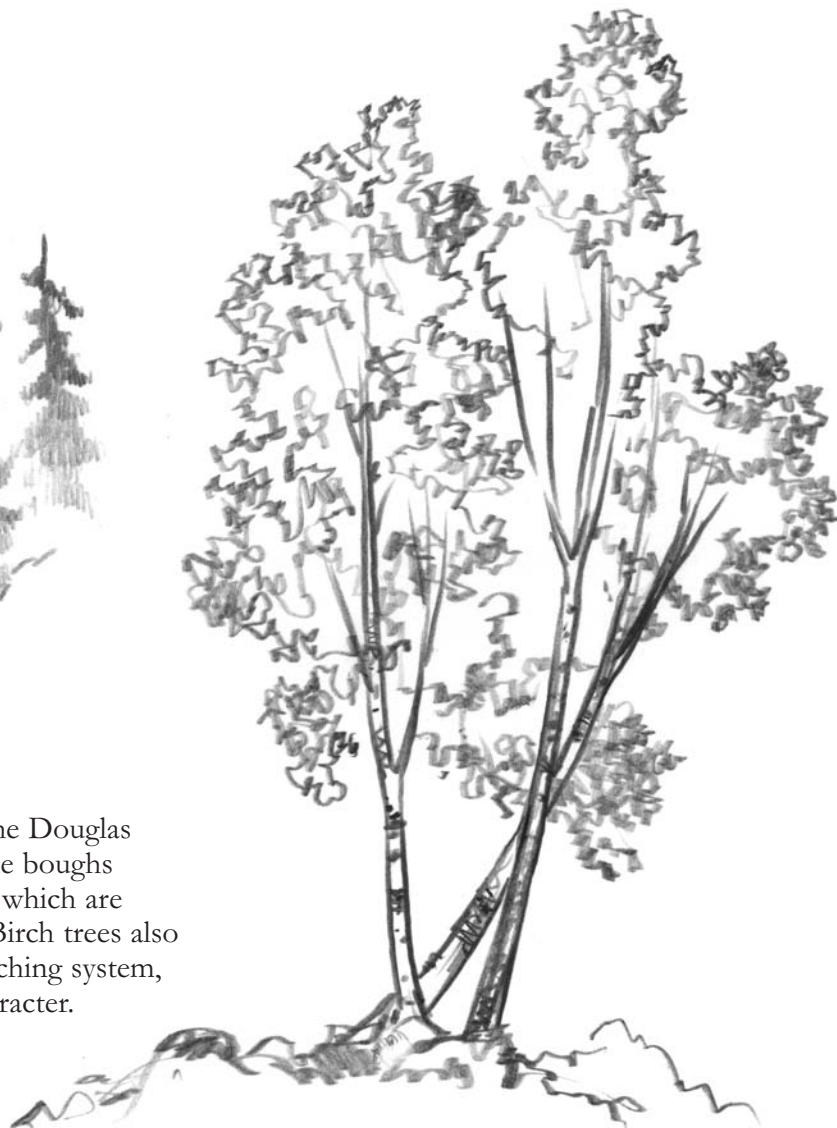
Notice that the slender bough pattern of the sugar pine differs from the dense foliage of the spruce.

SPRUCE



DOUGLAS FIR

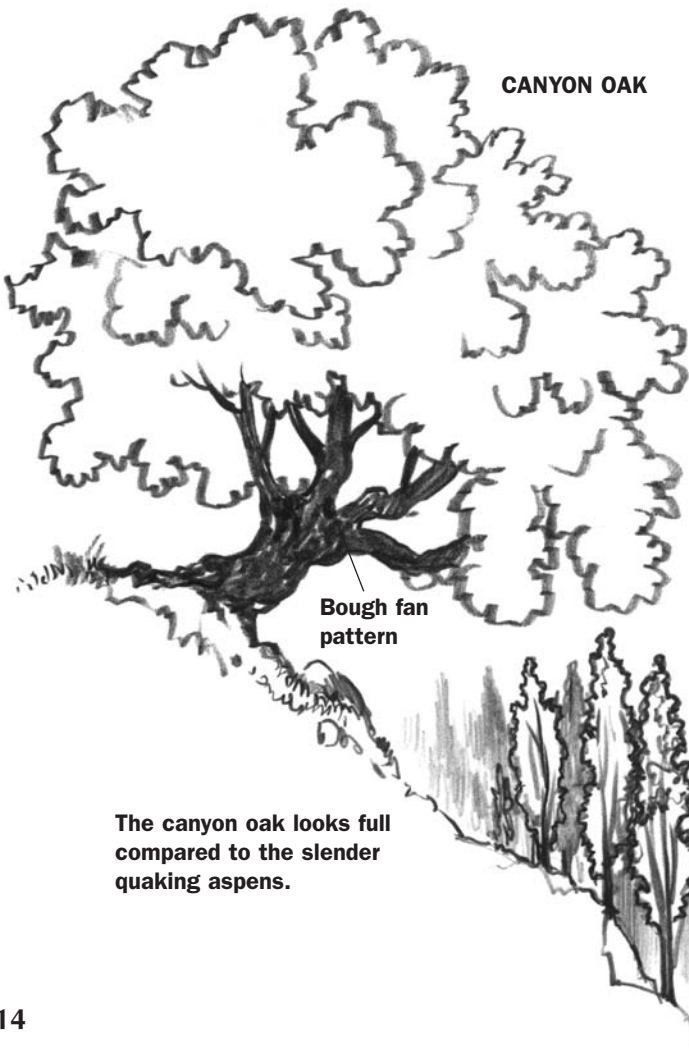
In contrast to the birch trees, the Douglas fir appears strong and solid. The boughs sometimes droop on these firs, which are sometimes called "hemlocks." Birch trees also grow an easily identifiable branching system, which gives them a delicate character.



YOUNG BIRCH TREES



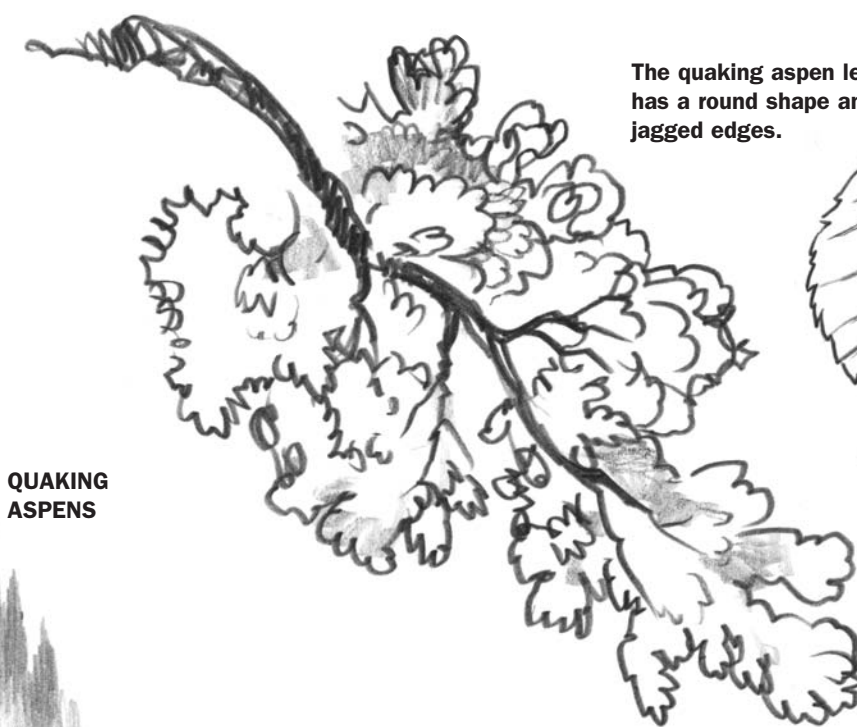
Sugar pine needles form in clusters of five.



CANYON OAK

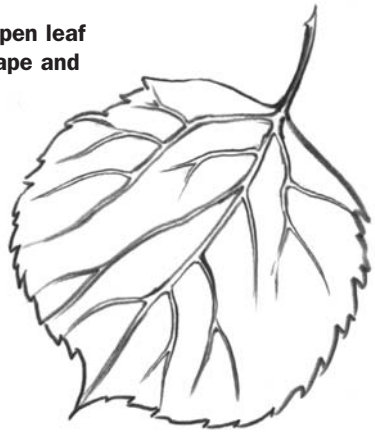
Bough fan pattern

The canyon oak looks full compared to the slender quaking aspens.



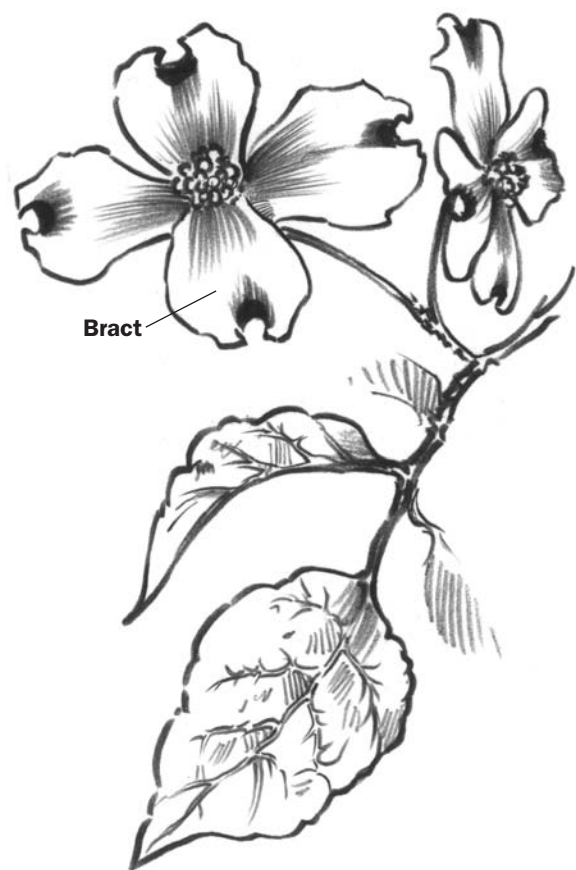
QUAKING ASPENS

The quaking aspen leaf has a round shape and jagged edges.



The canyon oak has dark bark and draping foliage.

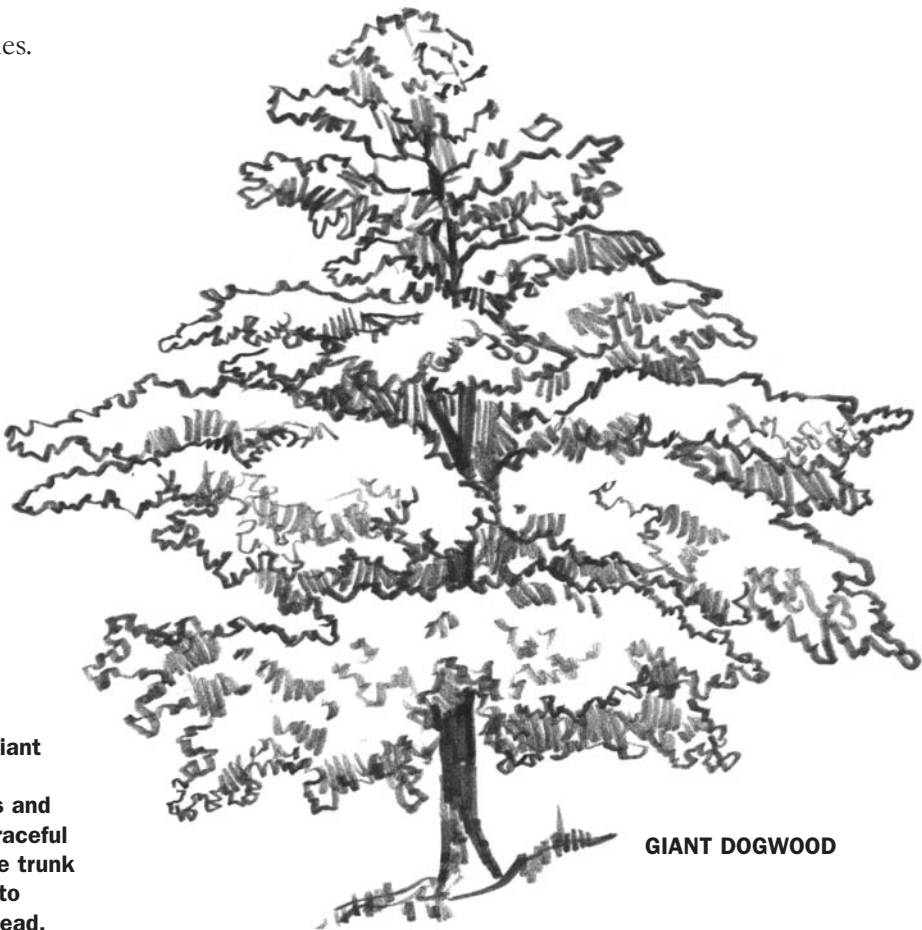
The leaves and flowers of dogwoods differ slightly among varieties. This is true for most tree families. Be sure to render these subtle differences to achieve an accurate likeness.



Bract

FLOWERING DOGWOOD

The shape of the giant dogwood, with its widespread boughs and dense foliage, is graceful and royal. Its single trunk appears too small to support such a spread.



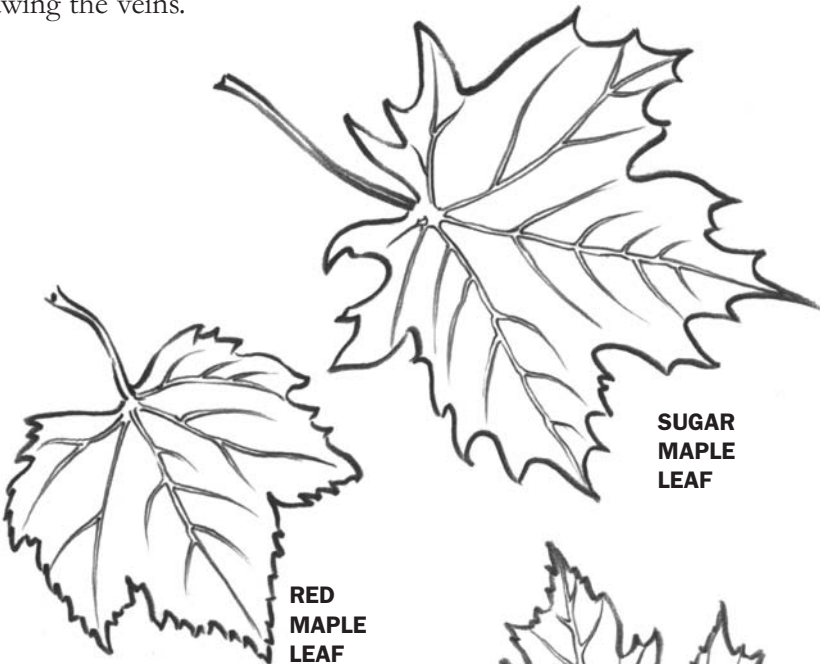
GIANT DOGWOOD

Notice the variety of maple leaves shown below. Although they are from the same family, each has a unique shape and pattern. Sketch each leaf, making sure the basic shape is blocked in correctly before drawing the veins.



RED MAPLE

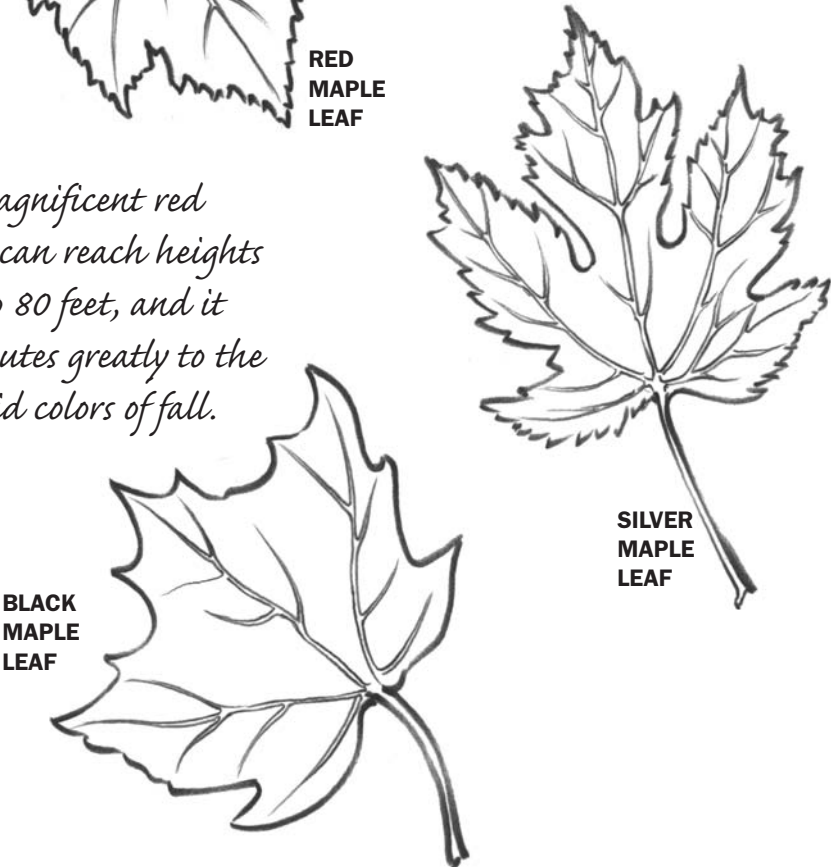
The red maple has a large trunk and strong branching to support the large mass of leaves.



SUGAR
MAPLE
LEAF

RED
MAPLE
LEAF

The magnificent red maple can reach heights of 60 to 80 feet, and it contributes greatly to the splendid colors of fall.



SILVER
MAPLE
LEAF

BLACK
MAPLE
LEAF

Tree Trunks

A tree trunk is basically a long cylindrical shape. Likewise, the branches are longer cylinders that extend from the trunk. Draw light elliptical lines around the trunk at strategic points to indicate changes in the trunk's direction.

Use broken elliptical lines as guides for drawing the tree trunk and branches.



A



B



C

Practice drawing the trunks on this page. In step A, use an HB pencil to lightly draw the basic shape and ellipses. In step B, refine the trunk by adding more ellipses, and then draw some curved lines to indicate the surface changes. In step C, begin shading using the side of an HB pencil. Continue shading to create the grooves and knots. Use the blunt point of a 2B pencil to render the dark areas.

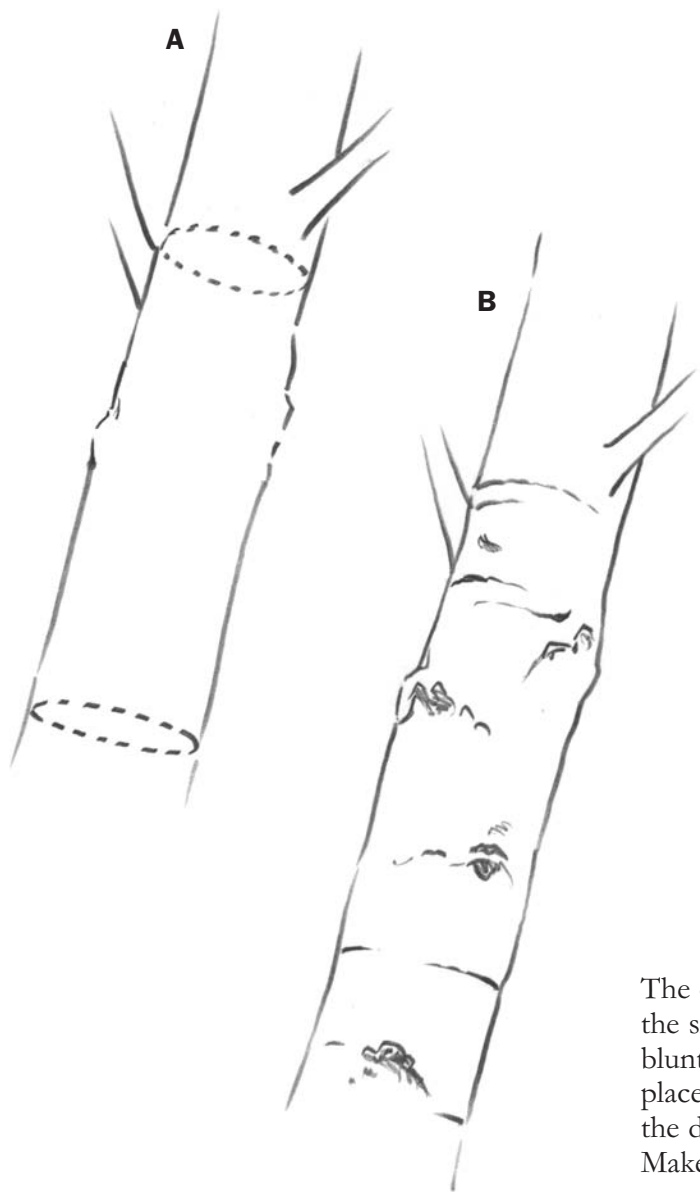


This trunk has a slender base with branches that extend upward.



Use heavy, bold lines to show the tree's sinewy form.

The birch tree trunk below is smooth compared with the rough patterns of the oak bark at the far right. Use the side of an HB pencil to draw the birch trunk. Remember to use ellipses as guides.



BIRCH TREE TRUNK

Bark patterns vary within the oak family. These subtle differences are just as important as those in the bough and leaf shapes. Use a sharp HB pencil to render the oak bark. Begin with light guidelines, and add darker values as you develop the textures. Keep all strokes loose and fresh so the drawing does not appear stiff or overworked.

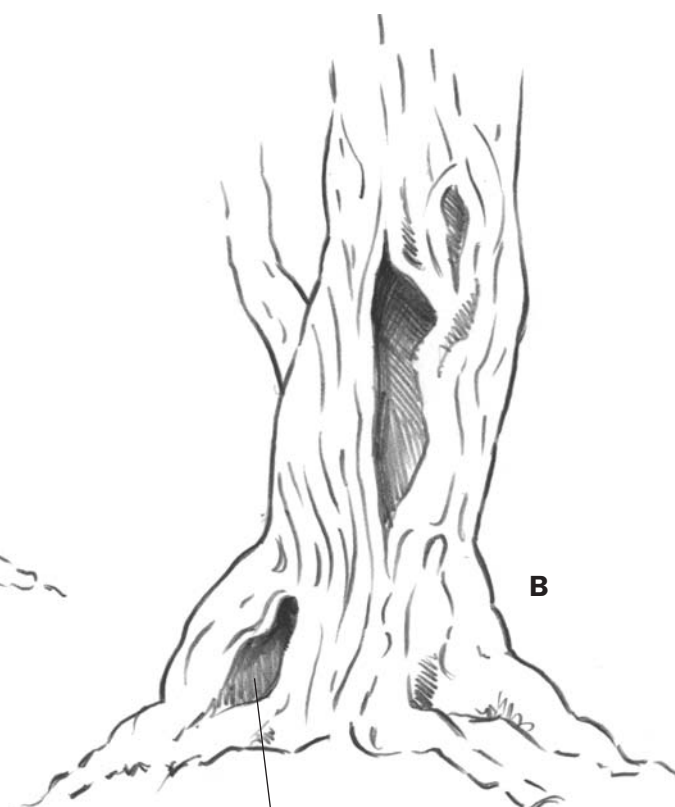
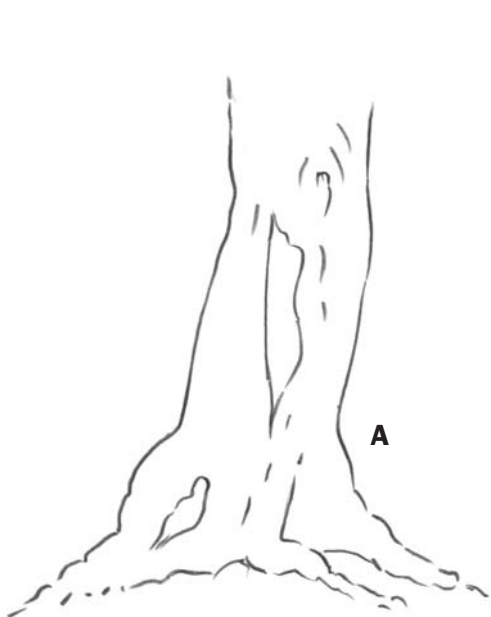


OAK BARK PATTERNS



Notice that dark values are used to indicate grooves and cracks in the bark.

The old trunk below was drawn using both the side of a sharp HB pencil and a round, blunt point. Lightly sketch the shape and place the hole in the trunk. Add shading until the desired depth and textures are obtained. Make sure your strokes follow the various curves and crevices of the trunk.



Variations of lines and values are used to shade the hollow areas of the tree.

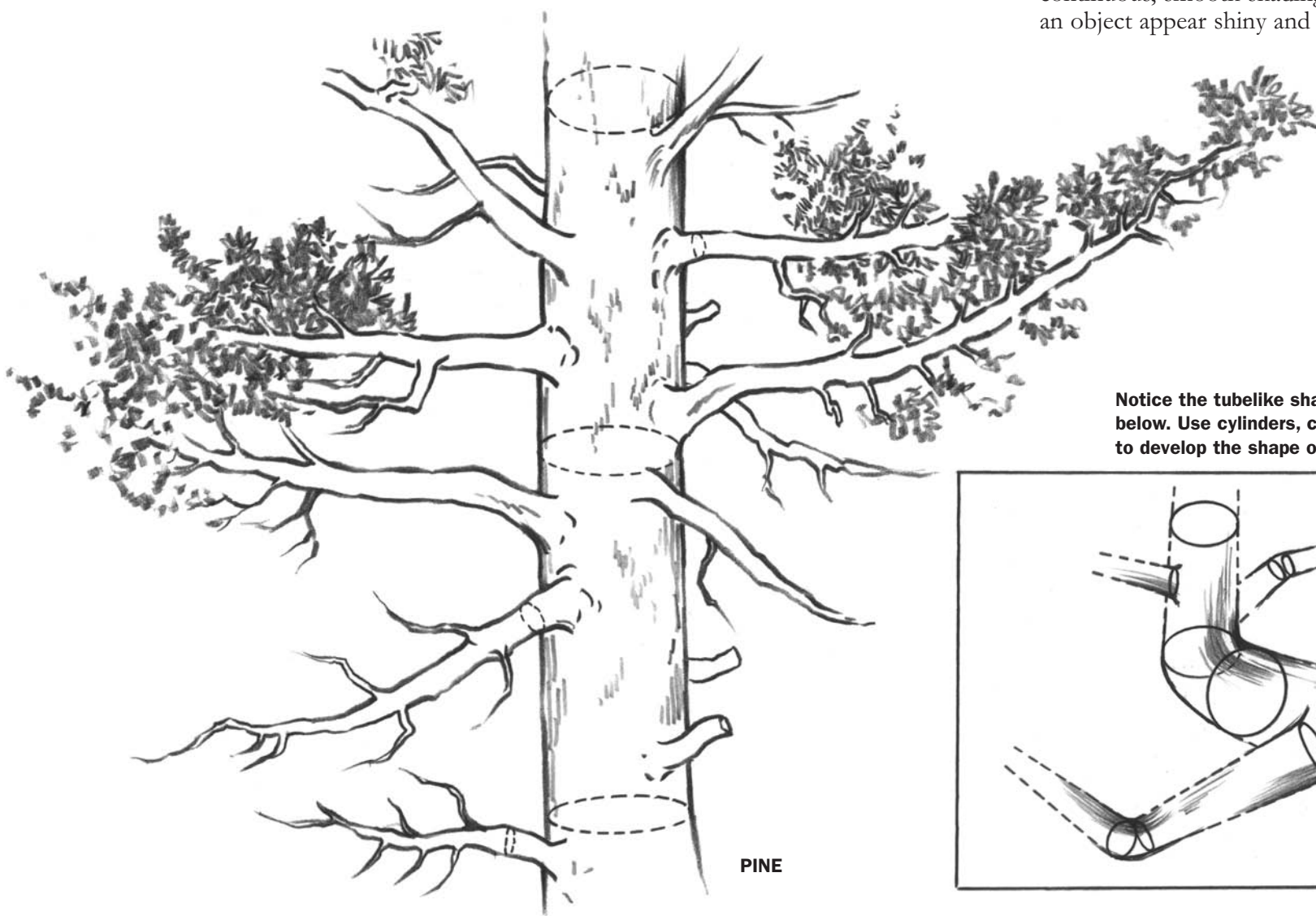
Branches & Boughs

As trees grow, they become both taller and thicker. Notice the different growth patterns of the different types of trees. With broad-leaved trees, the trunk divides into many crooked spreading branches, while the pine grows upward with shorter branches at somewhat regular intervals.



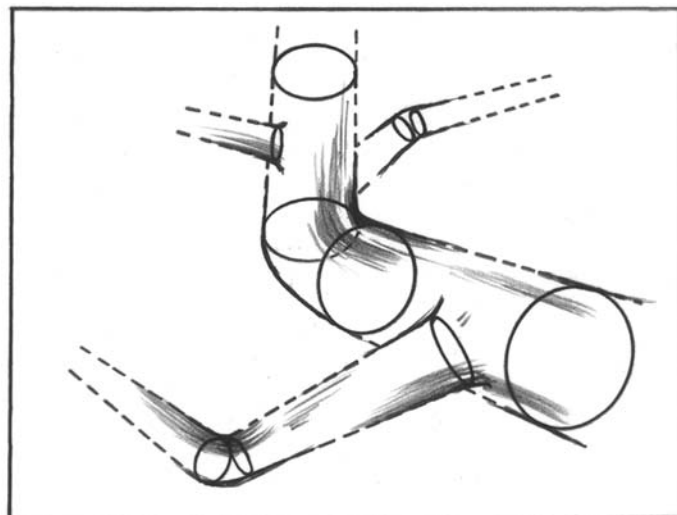
BROAD-LEAVED TREE

In step A, draw a rough sketch of the individual branches, showing where they change directions. Use the sketch as a guide for blocking in the branch shapes in step B. Finally, add shading to convey the roundness of the twisting limbs. Your shading strokes should be loose and broken, because continuous, smooth shading tends to make an object appear shiny and metallic.



PINE

Notice the tubelike shape of the diagram below. Use cylinders, circles, and ellipses to develop the shape of each branch.



These exercises will help you draw realistic branches and leaves. Study how these trees differ from one another. The foliage of the young mulberry trees at right is made up of small, continuous strokes. Notice that the boughs grow upward. The texture of the cottonwood leaves is similar, but it is more irregular, broken, and wider. Pay attention to the random branch pattern of this tree. The lines in the foliage of the pepper tree are more directional to give the feeling of draping. Note that the branches also droop downward.



A



B

The sharp point of an HB pencil is used for the young mulberry foliage.



YOUNG MULBERRIES



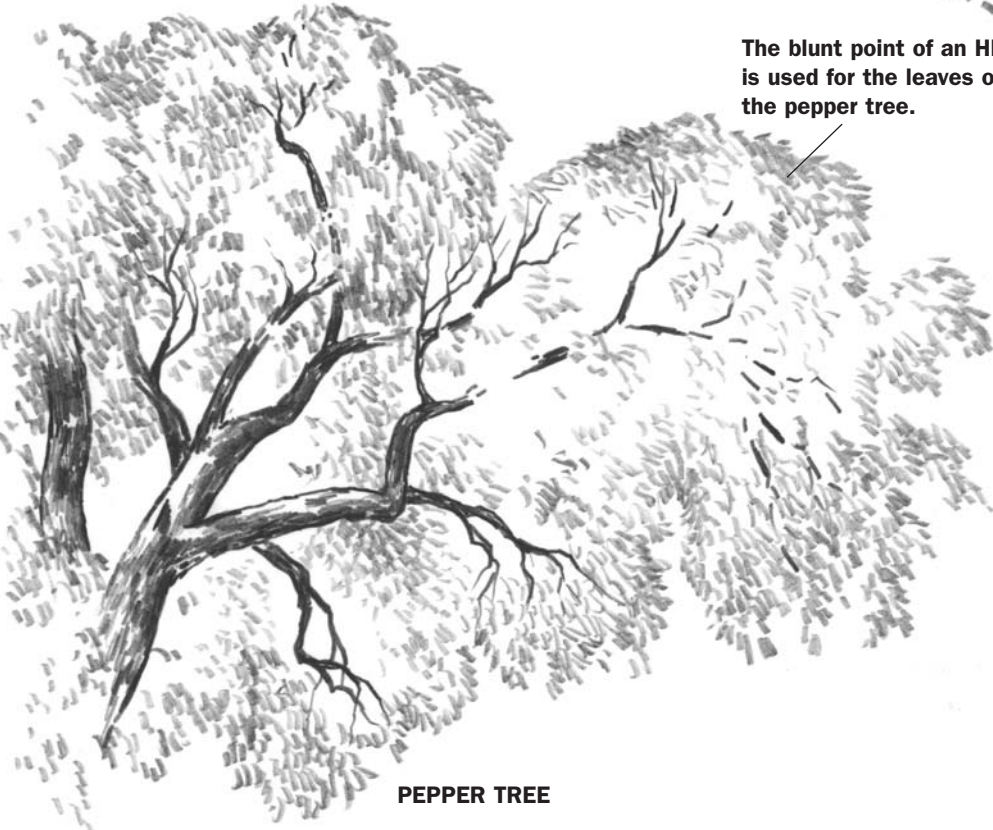
A



B

The side of an HB pencil is used for the cottonwood foliage.

In step A, begin each drawing by lightly sketching the general shape of the tree with the blunt point of an HB pencil. Once the basic shapes are correct, use light shading to indicate the middle values as shown in step B. Use a 2B pencil for the dark areas, and pull out highlights with the point of a kneaded eraser.



PEPPER TREE

The blunt point of an HB is used for the leaves of the pepper tree.



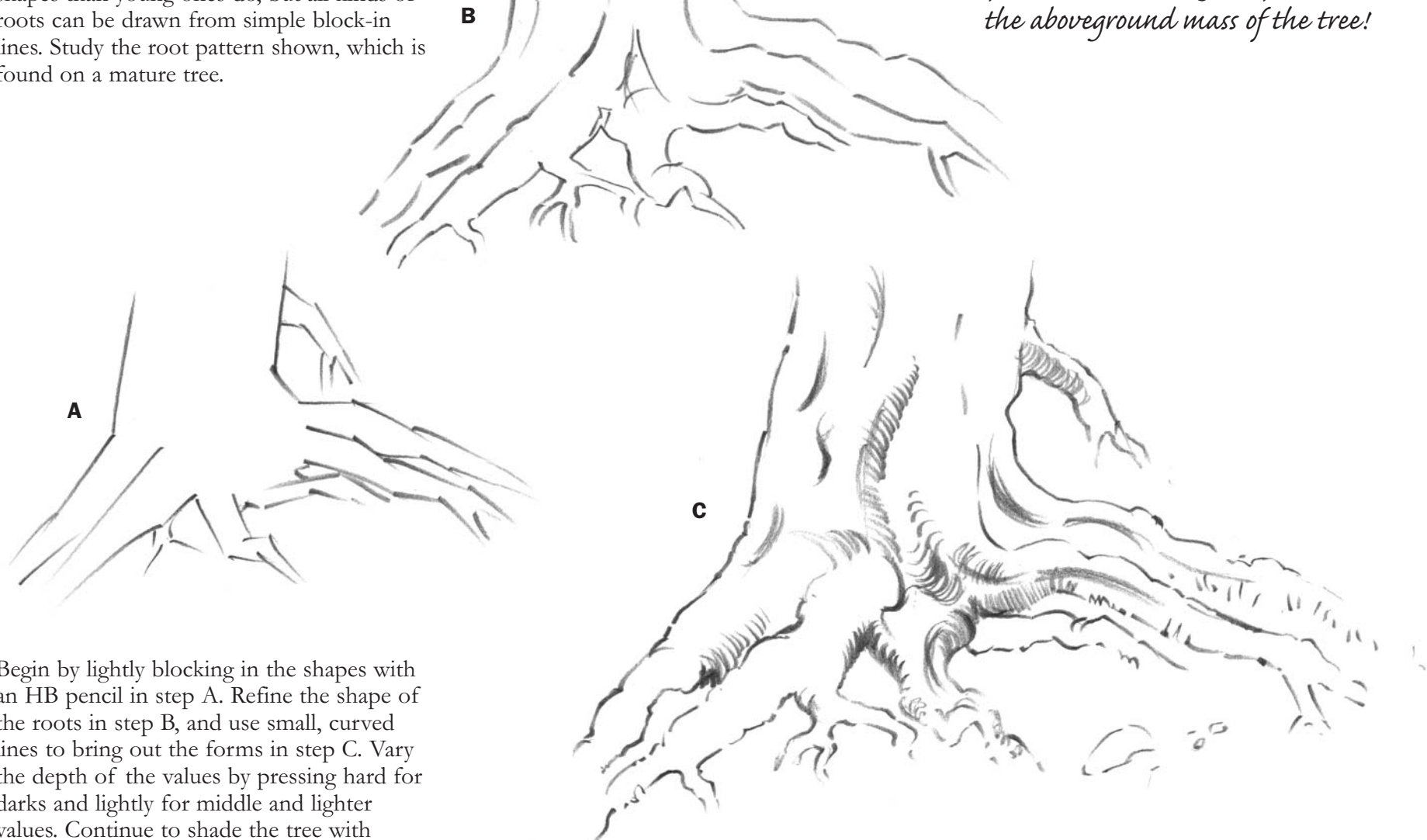
COTTONWOOD

Use a kneaded eraser to create soft highlights in the leaf areas.

Root Patterns

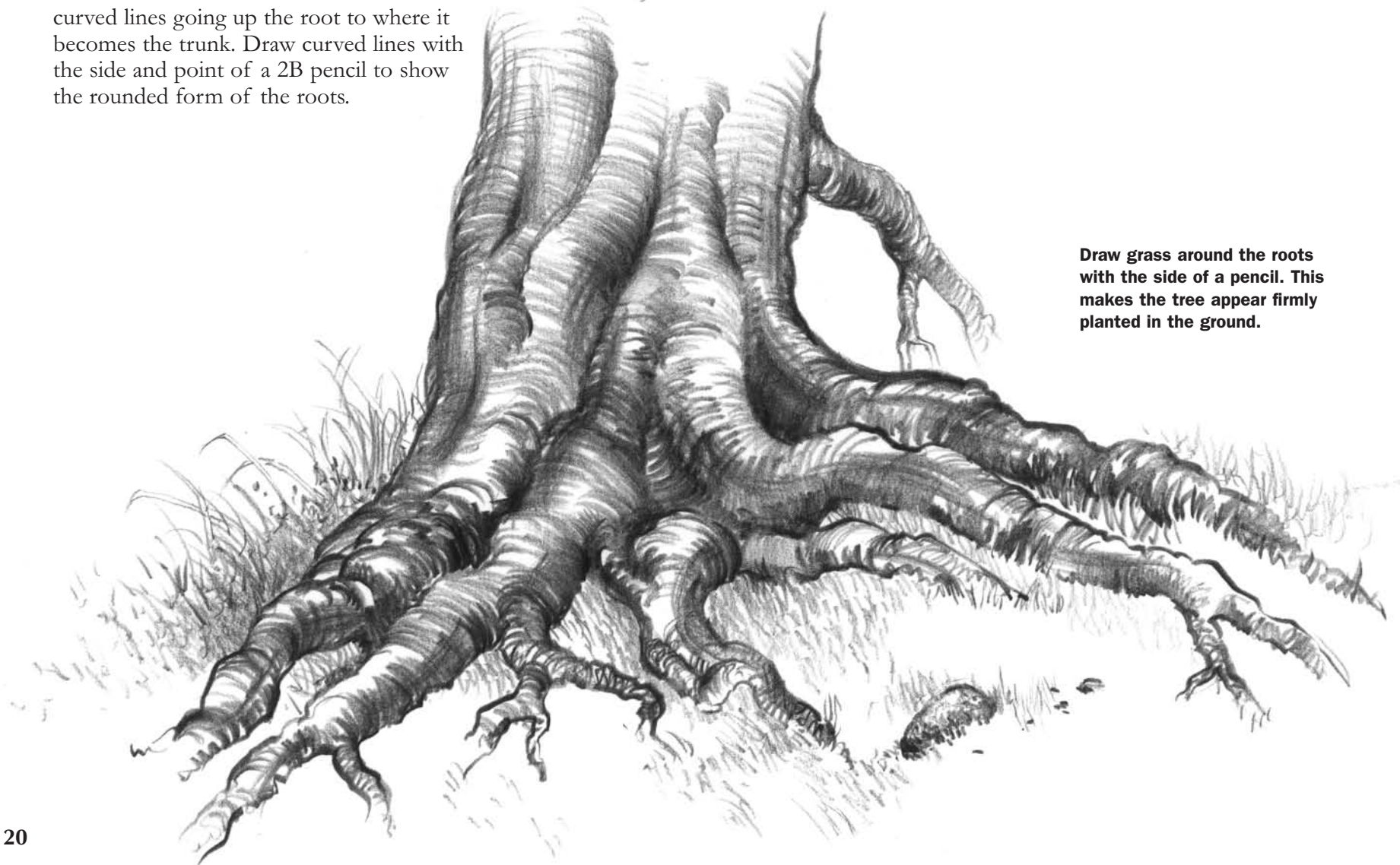
Tree roots grow down and outward like a crisscrossing net to anchor the tree in the ground. The root patterns have twists and bumps, which make them interesting to draw. Of course, old trees have more intricate shapes than young ones do, but all kinds of roots can be drawn from simple block-in lines. Study the root pattern shown, which is found on a mature tree.

The roots of some trees spread outward at a distance that matches their height. In fact, root systems sometimes greatly exceed the aboveground mass of the tree!



Begin by lightly blocking in the shapes with an HB pencil in step A. Refine the shape of the roots in step B, and use small, curved lines to bring out the forms in step C. Vary the depth of the values by pressing hard for darks and lightly for middle and lighter values. Continue to shade the tree with curved lines going up the root to where it becomes the trunk. Draw curved lines with the side and point of a 2B pencil to show the rounded form of the roots.

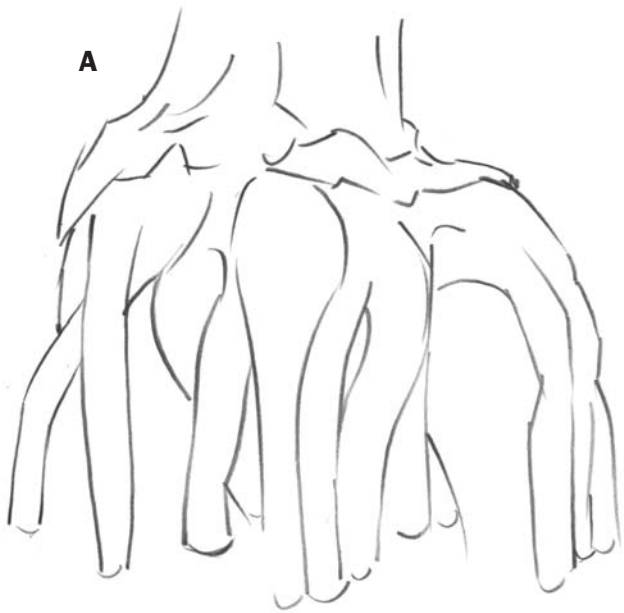
Draw grass around the roots with the side of a pencil. This makes the tree appear firmly planted in the ground.



Most trees are unable to grow in waterlogged ground, but the bald cypress flourishes in the swamplands of the southeastern United States. Its unusual root pattern is fun to draw.

In step A, lightly block in the roots growing down into the water, and sketch the trunk. In step B, establish the major shadows, and then add the middle values (the reverse order of the previous exercise's steps). Use the darkest shadows to judge the depth of other shadows and textures. Develop the rough texture of the trunk using the blunt point and side of an HB pencil. Use the same pencil to draw the reflections in the water.

A

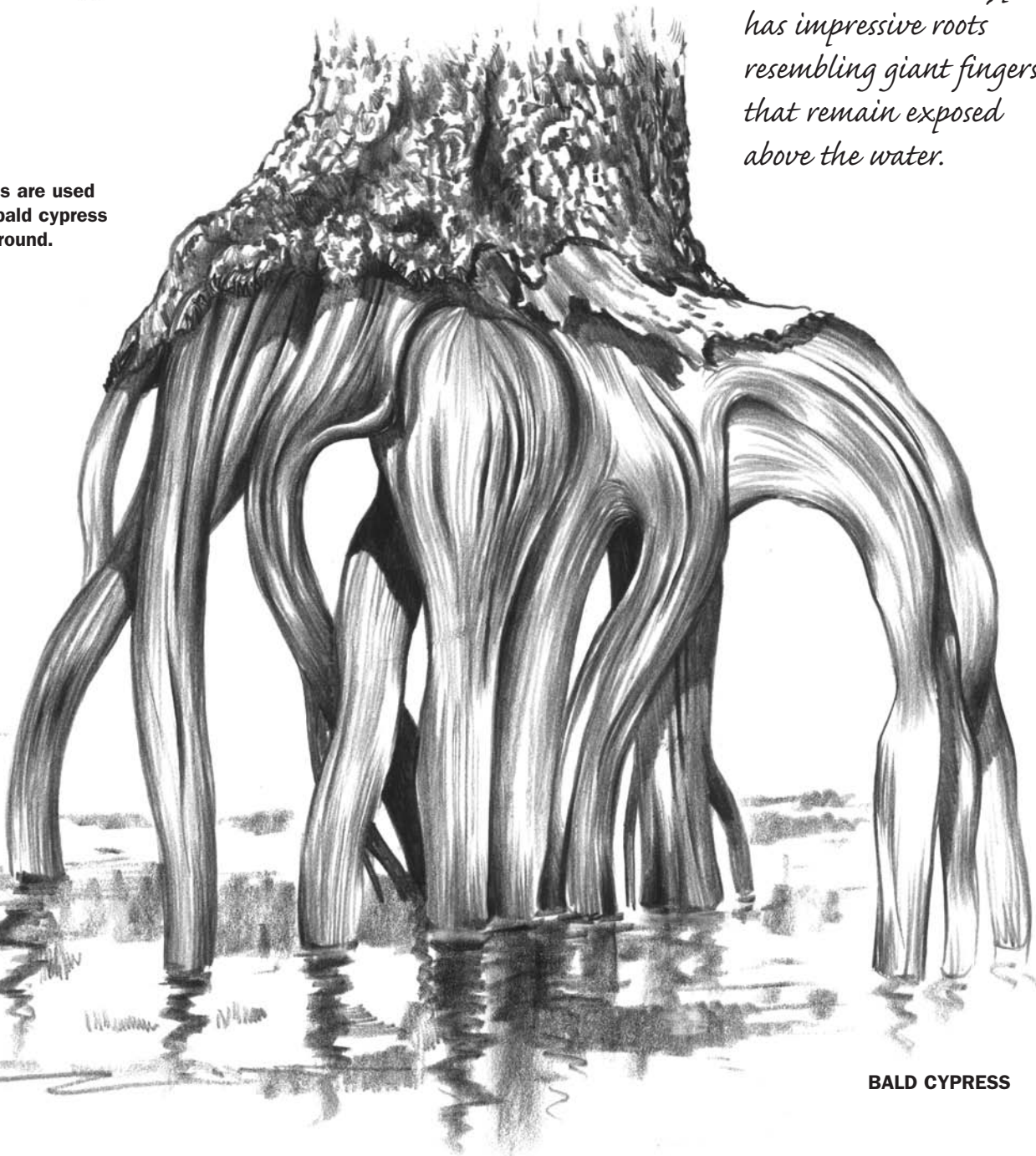


B



The unusual bald cypress has impressive roots resembling giant fingers that remain exposed above the water.

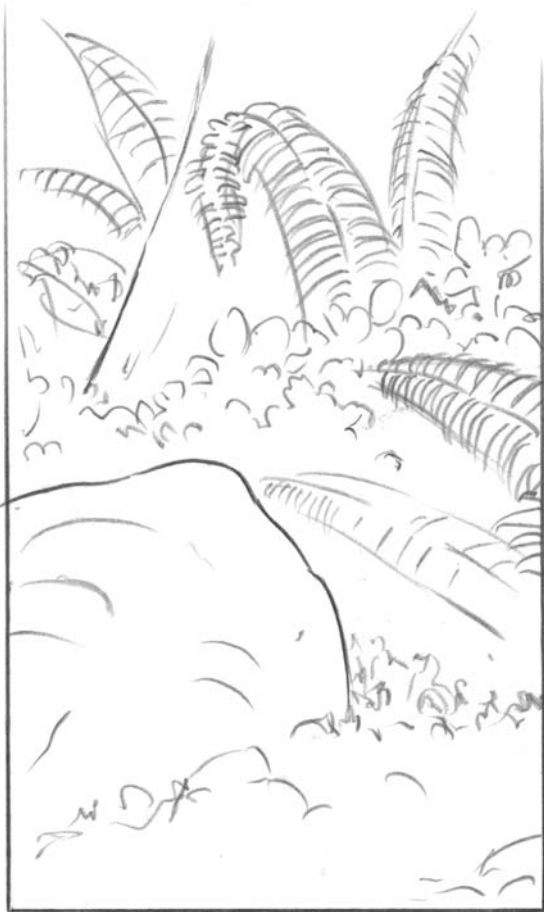
Lighter values are used to draw the bald cypress in the background.



BALD CYPRESS

Tree Base & Foliage Textures

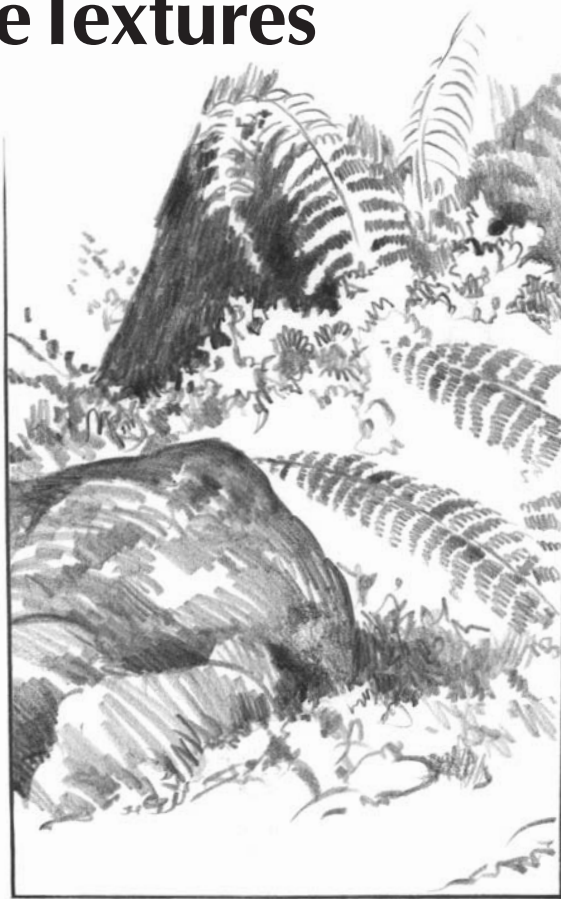
Many elements can be found at the base of a tree, including rocks, moss, ferns, twigs, and dead leaves. Your drawings of trees will look more natural when they are surrounded by a variety of plants and other landscape elements.



A



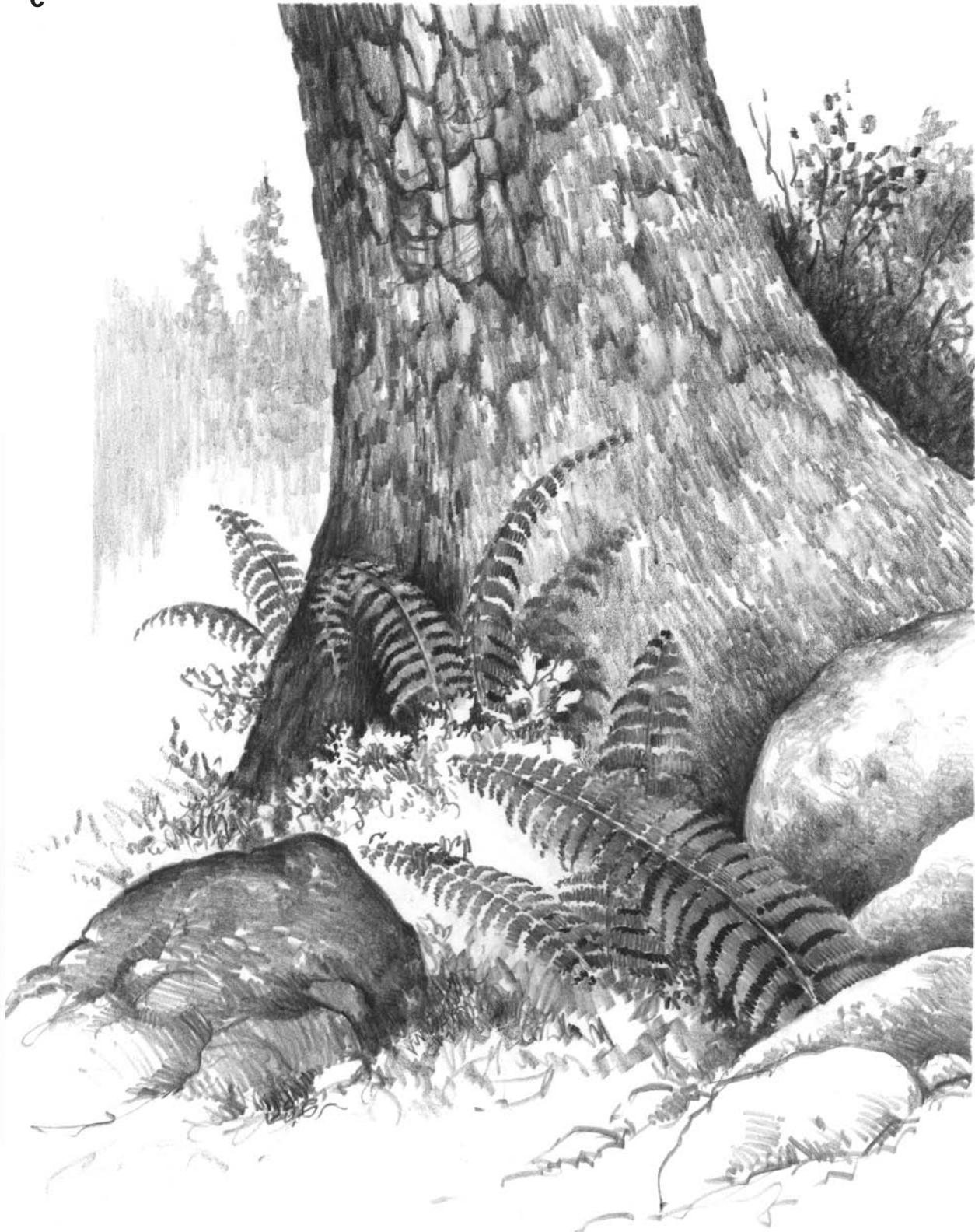
B



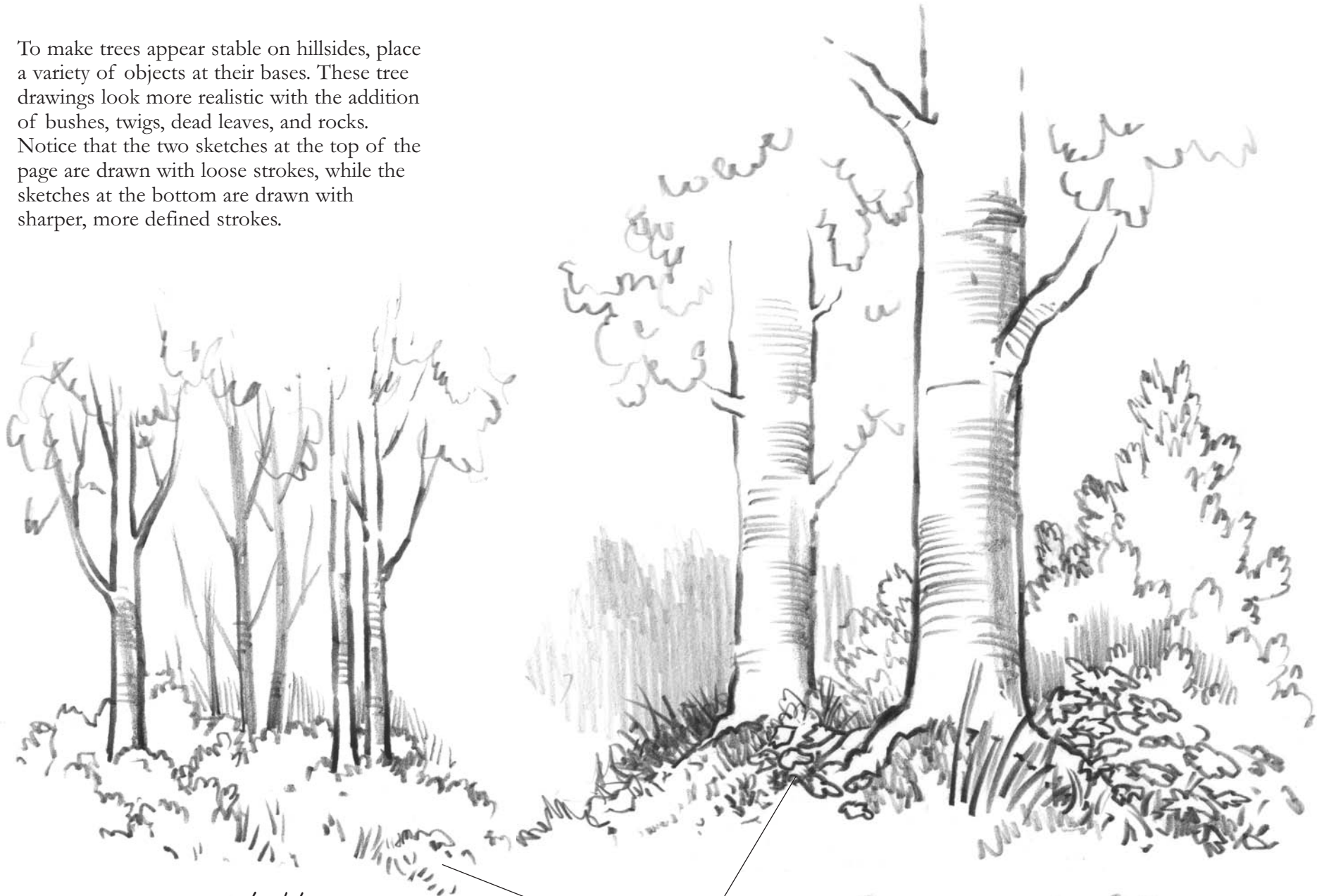
C

Ferns, moss, and fungi are moisture-loving plants, which are often found growing on and near trees.

This display of various landscape elements is very detailed. In step A, use a sharp HB pencil to lightly block in the subjects. With the blunt point of an HB, begin shading the middle values at the base of the tree and on the rocks, as shown in step B. Add textures for the plants with the point of an HB, and apply strokes with a 2B for darker surfaces and crevices as shown in step C. Continue to add form and texture as desired.



To make trees appear stable on hillsides, place a variety of objects at their bases. These tree drawings look more realistic with the addition of bushes, twigs, dead leaves, and rocks. Notice that the two sketches at the top of the page are drawn with loose strokes, while the sketches at the bottom are drawn with sharper, more defined strokes.



Every autumn, trees shed leaves. This "leaf litter" decays and provides nutrients for growing plants, and so the leaves are continually recycled.

In some drawings, only a suggestion of ground foliage is necessary.



Notice the use of opposing lines, which lead the eye through the drawing.

Dead & Fallen Trees

Many trees are killed by organisms such as insects or fungi. But dead or fallen trees still make interesting drawing subjects. In this example, the tree does not have any bark. The exposed surface shows a few knots and the direction of the wood grain. The surrounding elements make the tree appear to be firmly resting on a base.

This entire rendering was done with an HB pencil. Check that your block-in lines are correct in step A before adding details in step B. Notice the limbs; small branches split off from larger branches. Begin to suggest ground elements, such as the rocks, grasses, and shrubs.

Use the side of the pencil lead for the basic layout sketches.

A

Remember to use elliptical lines and cylinders when blocking in the trunk and branches.

B

Be sure to include the shadows cast by the branches.

C

Variations of values create the texture of the trunk of the fallen red maple.

In step C, indicate the darkest shadows, and further develop the landscape. Apply more pressure to the pencil to make darker lines and grooves. In the final step, continue to shade and create the texture of the tree. Add details such as the knots and ground foliage. Remember to leave some white areas for contrast.

The broken branches of fallen trees may have twisting shapes, which can create interesting compositions. You will need an HB pencil and a 2B pencil to draw this example.



A



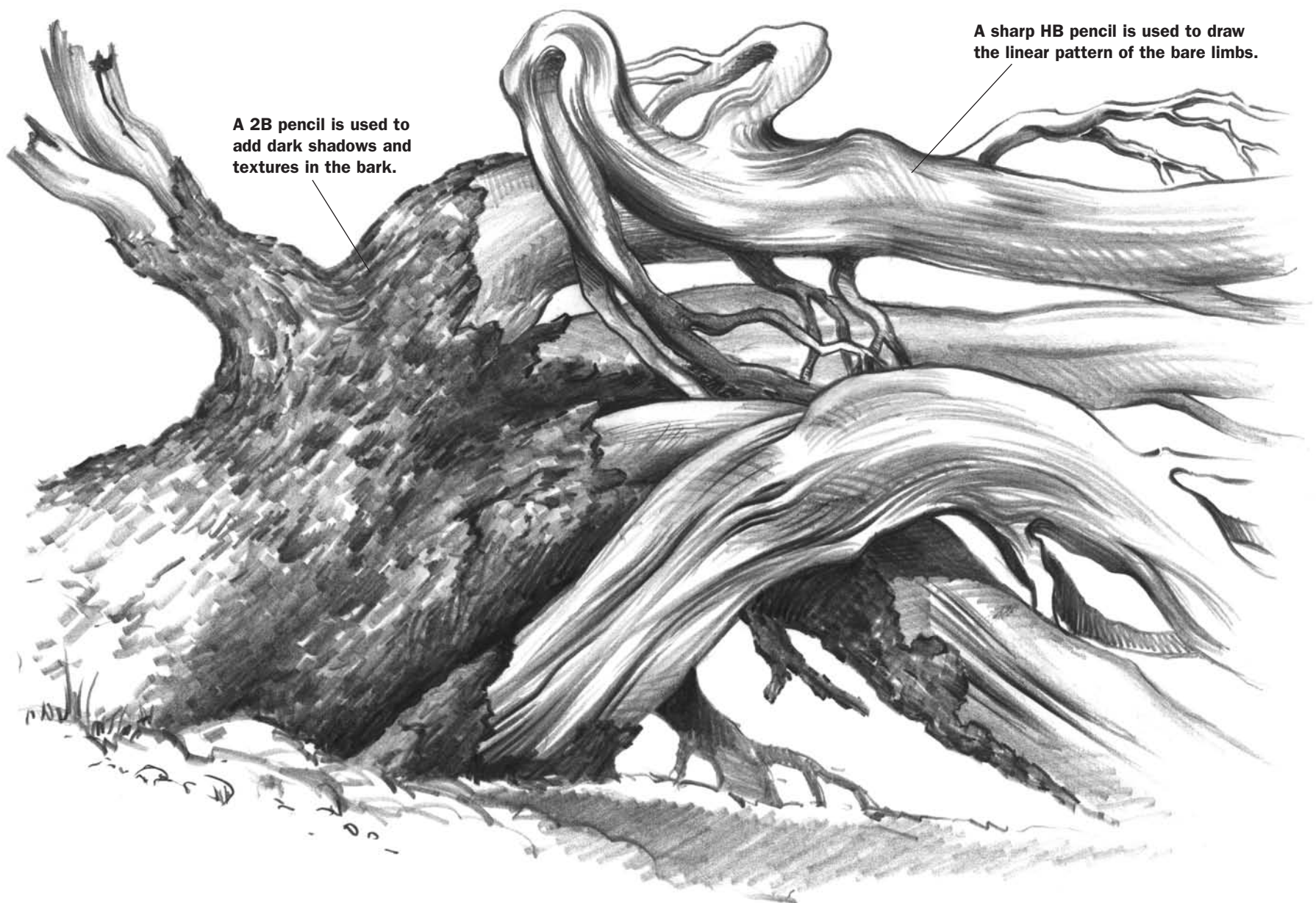
B

Partially buried specimens like this one are found along the seacoast and riverbanks.



C

In step A, start by blocking in the largest shapes. In steps B and C, add shading to indicate the different depths of shadows and branches. Develop the rough areas of bark and the smooth areas that reveal the bare wood. The strokes should follow the contours of the branches. Then draw sand, pebbles, and a shadow at the base to set the tree. Use the sides and points of the pencils to achieve the desired textures.



A 2B pencil is used to add dark shadows and textures in the bark.

A sharp HB pencil is used to draw the linear pattern of the bare limbs.

Majestic Oak

Tree drawings provide ample opportunity for practicing cast shadows. When drawing cast shadows, note these few observations: (1) a shadow follows the shape of the ground or area on which it is cast; (2) value changes can occur within the shadow; (3) surface textures and details may be discernible within the shadow; and (4) lighter areas may appear within a shadow cast by tree foliage.

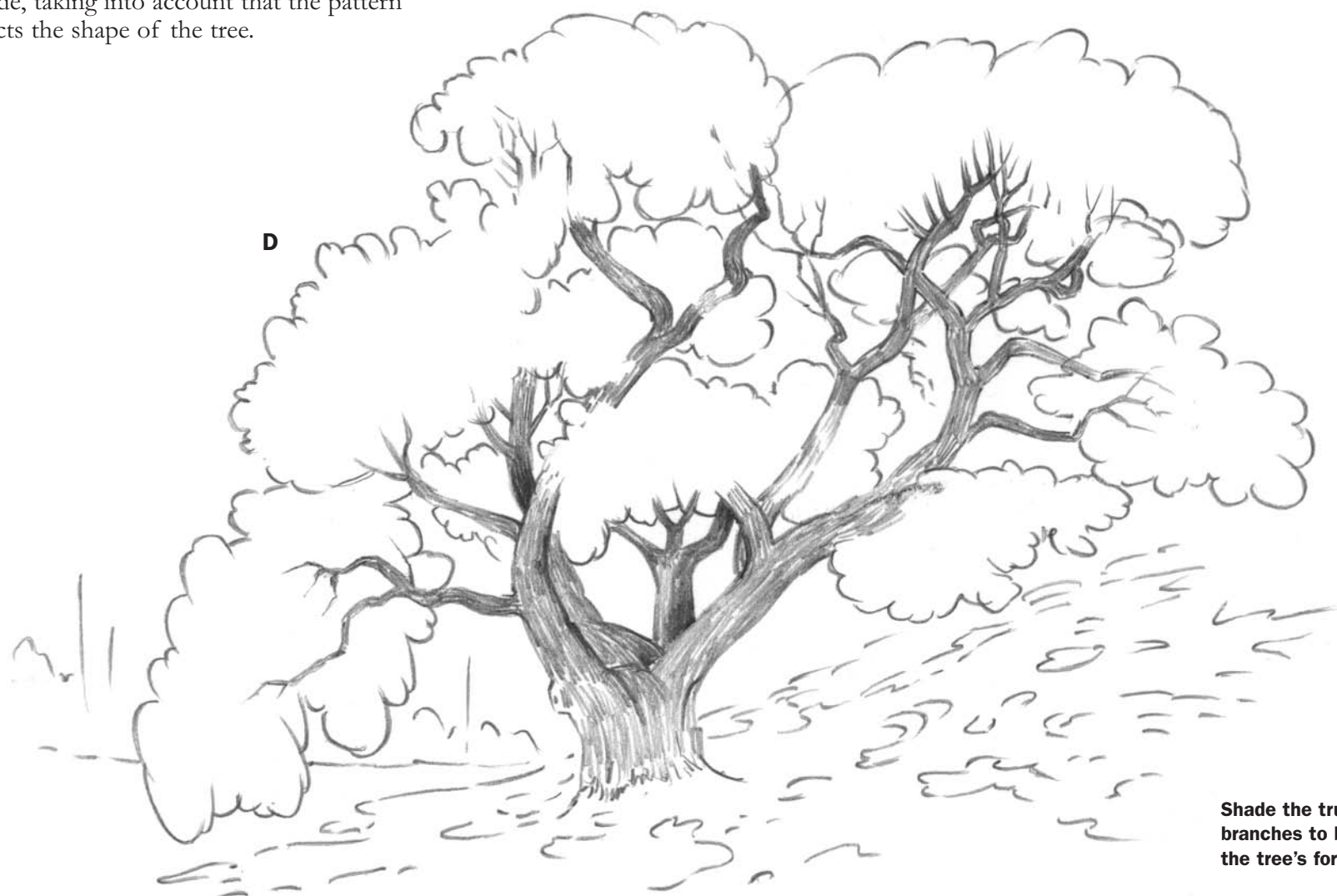
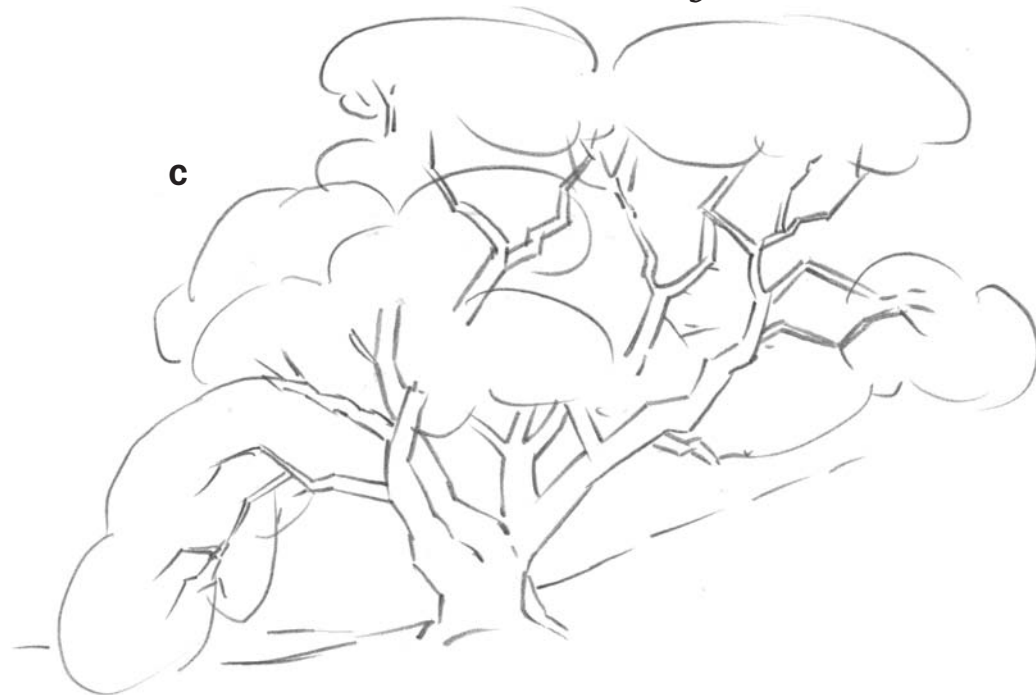
For any accurate drawing, you need to be aware of the light source and render its effects. In this drawing, the sunlight shines through the gaps in the foliage and is projected onto the ground plane.



Begin by lightly sketching the shape of the tree. Next, shade the trunk using the side of an HB pencil, and add smaller branches with the point of the pencil. Remember to leave a few light areas in the foliage for depth. Also indicate the shadow cast on the grassy hillside, taking into account that the pattern reflects the shape of the tree.



Perhaps because of the size, strength, and long life of trees, many cultures and religions honor them.

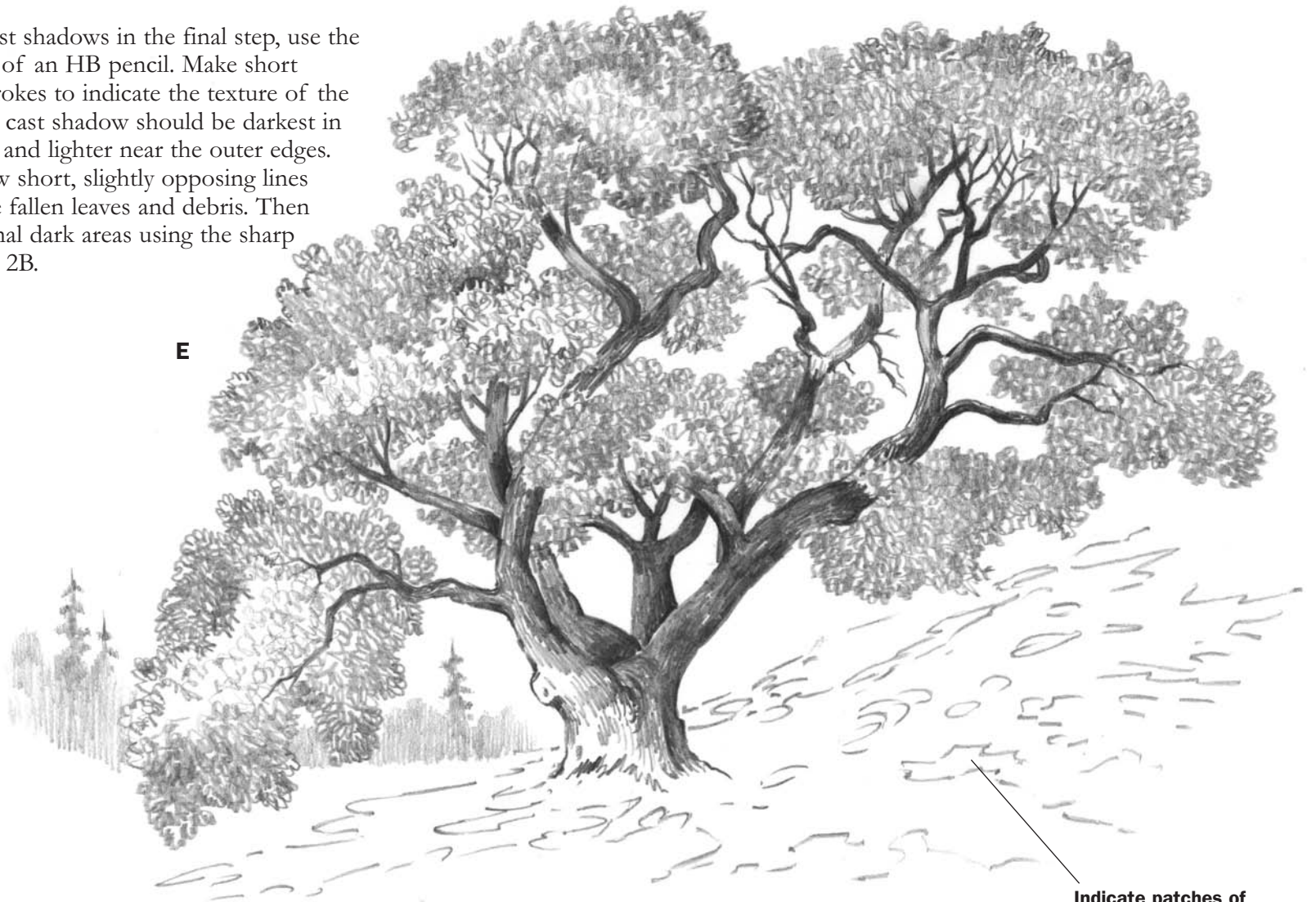


Shade the trunk and branches to bring out the tree's form.

Lightly sketch in the distant trees with an HB pencil. Next, add shading to the trunk to bring out the form. Don't try to draw each leaf; instead use small, elliptical, continuous strokes to suggest the foliage.

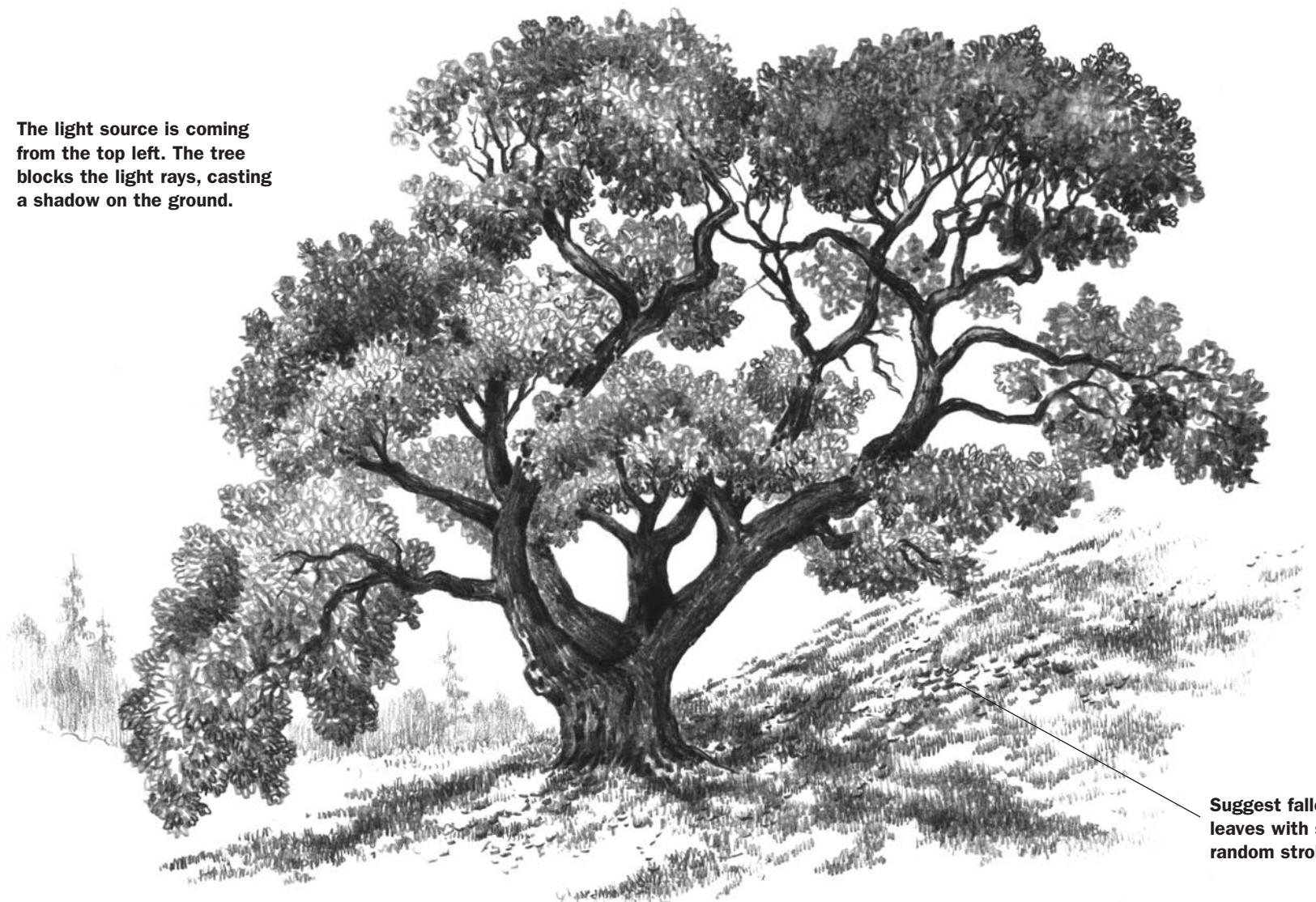
For the cast shadows in the final step, use the fine point of an HB pencil. Make short vertical strokes to indicate the texture of the grass. The cast shadow should be darkest in the center and lighter near the outer edges. Place a few short, slightly opposing lines to indicate fallen leaves and debris. Then add the final dark areas using the sharp point of a 2B.

E



Indicate patches of sunlight in the shadow.

The light source is coming from the top left. The tree blocks the light rays, casting a shadow on the ground.



Suggest fallen leaves with short, random strokes.

Sycamore Lane

A good sketch will go a long way toward capturing the mood of a scene. In this drawing, the tree is obviously old and majestic. The trunk leans dramatically from its base to the middle of the drawing at the top. The winding road serves two purposes—it leads the eye into the drawing and creates contrast, which balances out the nearly straight line of the trunk.

To begin this scene, place the basic shapes, refine them, and then add values. Apply light and middle values to establish a backdrop for more intense shading.

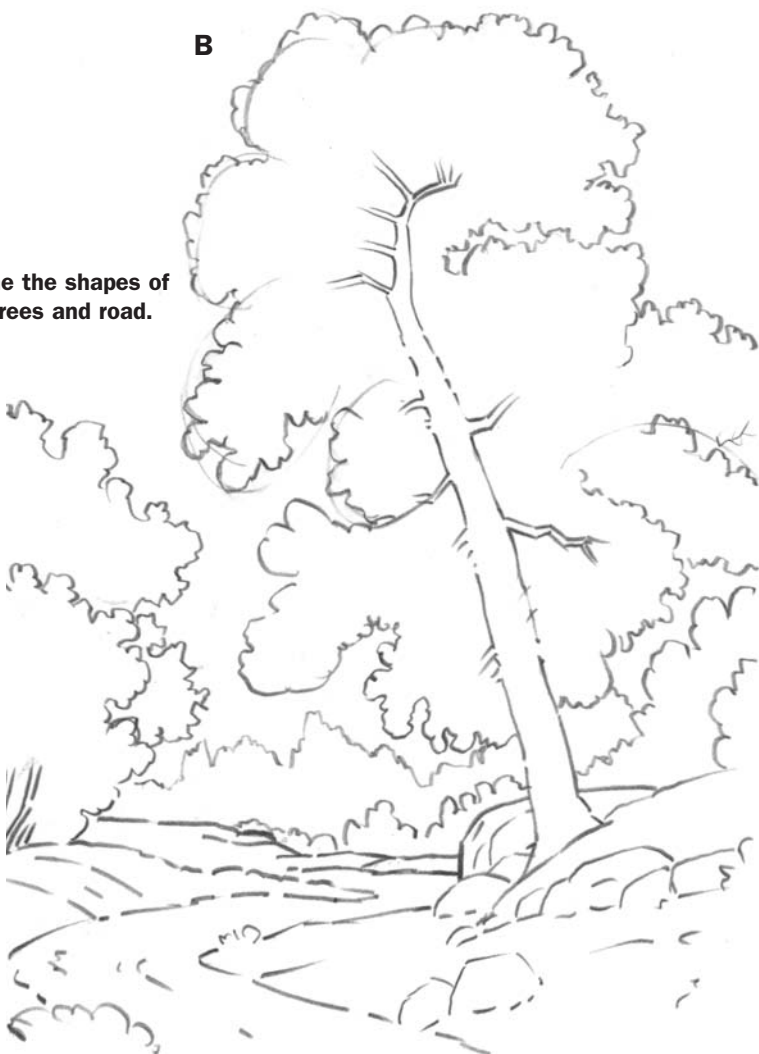
A

Use an HB pencil to block in the mass shapes.



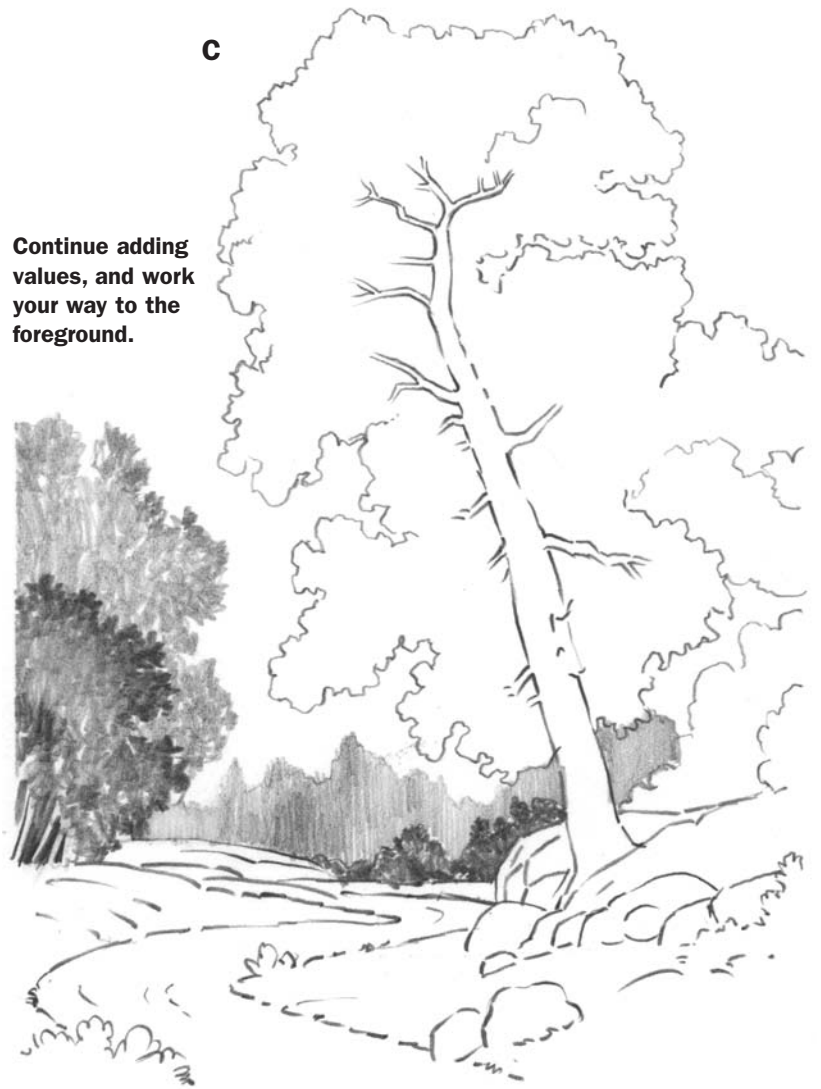
B

Refine the shapes of the trees and road.



C

Continue adding values, and work your way to the foreground.



Use light vertical strokes for the trees in the background. Continue to add values and details as you work toward the foreground.

D



Use the side of an HB for the wide strokes of foliage and shaded areas.

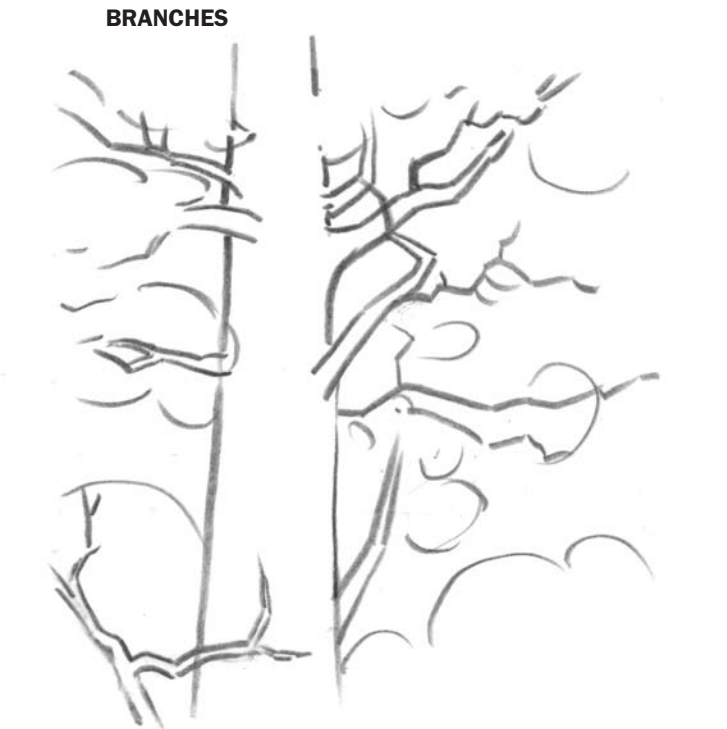
Add final dark values using the blunt point of a 2B pencil. Continue the foliage texture, leaving some areas lighter to create depth. Use the side of an HB pencil to lightly shade the sky areas. Clean out the cloud forms with a kneaded eraser.



Sierra Pines

This peaceful forest scene holds your interest because of the strong contrast between lights and darks. Here the composition is held together by the careful placement of all the elements, such as the pine trees framing the mountains in the background.

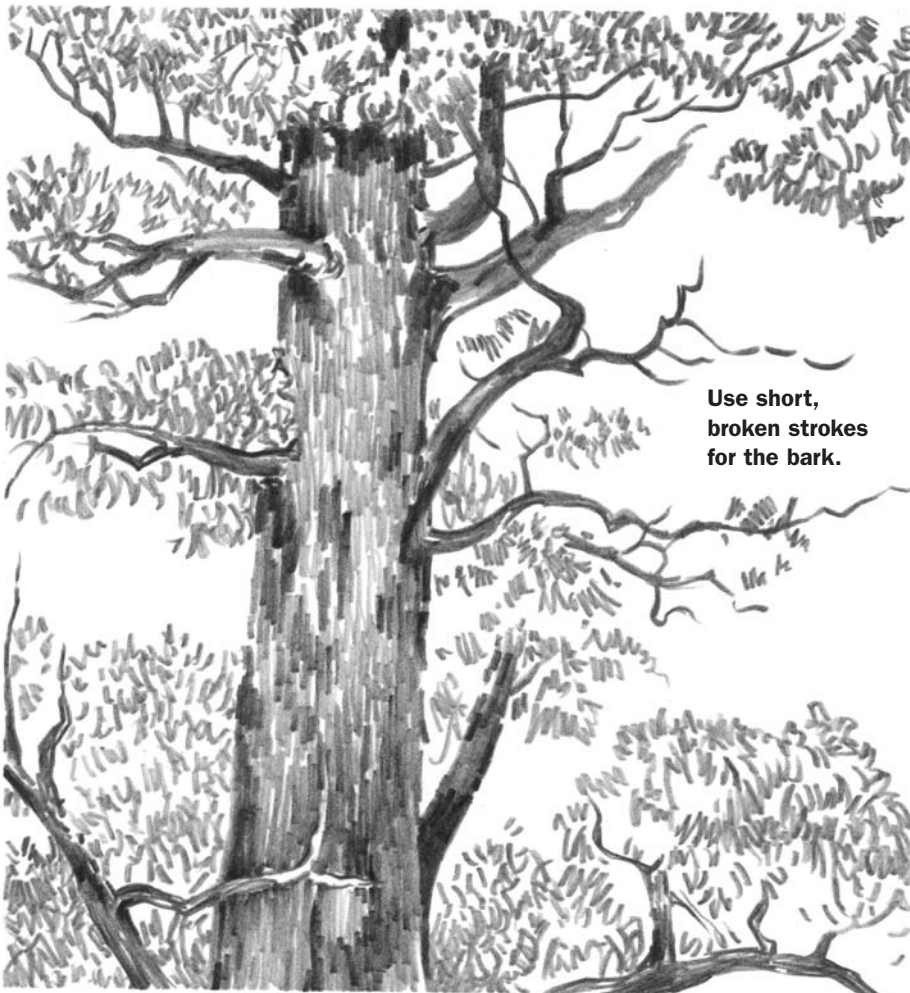
The trunks, branches, foliage, and roots of pine trees are interesting drawing subjects. Keep the lines simple as you block in the objects in this detailed drawing. As you continue to draw, build up more depth in the picture area. Try not to focus on any one area for too long; the goal is to gradually develop all the elements at the same time to create a balanced, pleasing effect.



A
Block in the shape of the large pine.



B
Use strokes that follow the surface and texture of the area.



Use short, broken strokes for the bark.

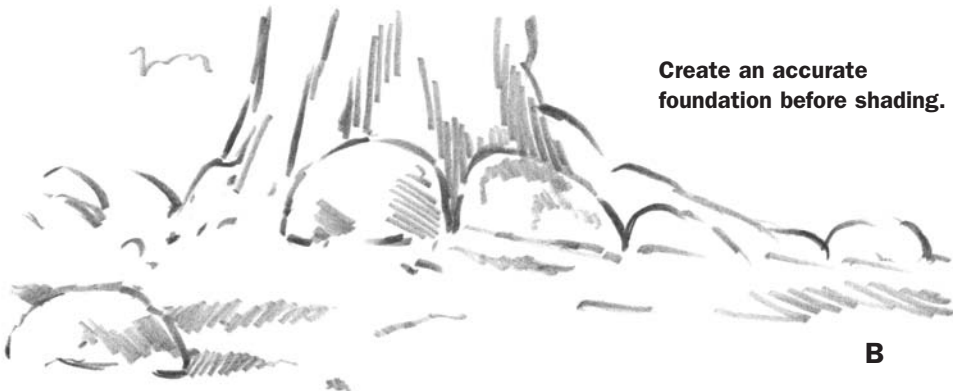
C

TREE BASE



Sketch in rocks to "ground" the pine.

A



Create an accurate foundation before shading.

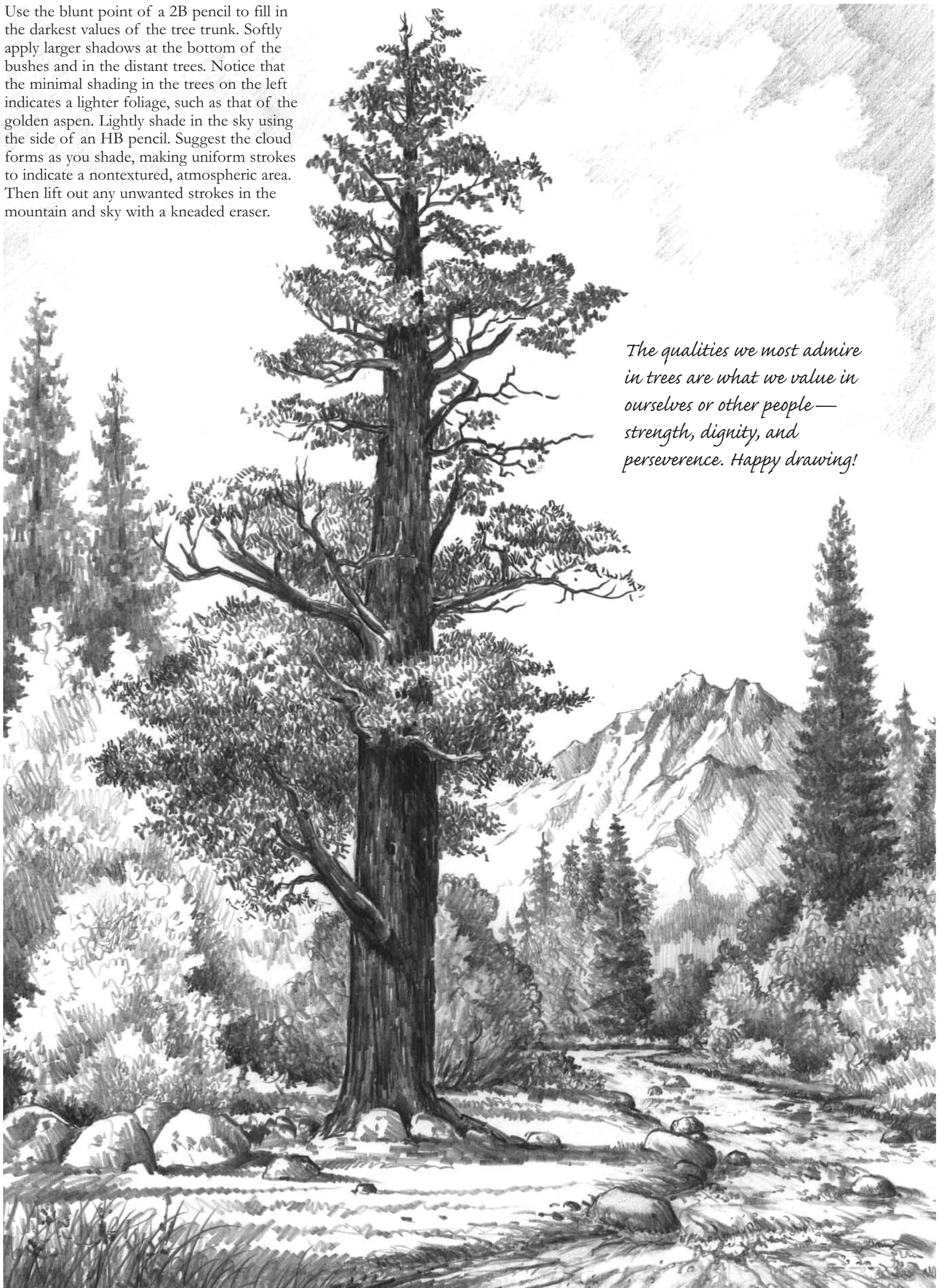
B



Develop dark shading last with a 2B pencil.

C

Use the blunt point of a 2B pencil to fill in the darkest values of the tree trunk. Softly apply larger shadows at the bottom of the bushes and in the distant trees. Notice that the minimal shading in the trees on the left indicates a lighter foliage, such as that of the golden aspen. Lightly shade in the sky using the side of an HB pencil. Suggest the cloud forms as you shade, making uniform strokes to indicate a nontextured, atmospheric area. Then lift out any unwanted strokes in the mountain and sky with a kneaded eraser.



*The qualities we most admire
in trees are what we value in
ourselves or other people—
strength, dignity, and
perseverance. Happy drawing!*



About the Artist

William F. Powell is an internationally recognized artist and one of America's foremost colorists. A native of Huntington, West Virginia, Bill studied at the Art Student's Career School in New York; Harrow Technical College in Harrow, England; and the Louvre Free School of Art in Paris, France. He has been professionally involved in fine art, commercial art, and technical illustration for more than 40 years. His experience as an art instructor includes oil, watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil, and pastel—with subjects ranging from landscapes to portraits and wildlife. Much of his work has been reproduced as prints and collector's plates, and he has produced numerous contract paintings and illustrations for a variety of publishers. Bill also conducts painting workshops and produces instructional videos that employ unique methods of in-depth presentation and demonstration. Bill holds awards for his technical art, which has been used for major projects, such as space programs and environmental studies. His portfolio also includes model making, background sets for films, animated cartoons, and animated films for computer mockup programs.



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