

Nature Compasses

In the early days of Canada's settlement, the explorer learned how to tell direction from the indigenous culture. We have shown some ways of finding direction by the sun and the stars, but when these were not visible, indigenous people used their powers of observation of nature to guide them.

SOUND

Indigenous people say they can tell the NORTH side of a hill by the lack of noise when walking. The North side is usually most mossy, while the SOUTH side will be noisier with dried leaves and crackling twigs.

WOODPECKERS

Woodpeckers will usually dig holes on the EAST side of a tree.



WEBS

Spiders apparently spin their webs on the south side of anything.

TREE STUMP RINGS

Tree stump rings will show a wider growth on the NORTH and NORTH EAST sides. The bark on these sides is also thicker.



MOSS or LICHEN

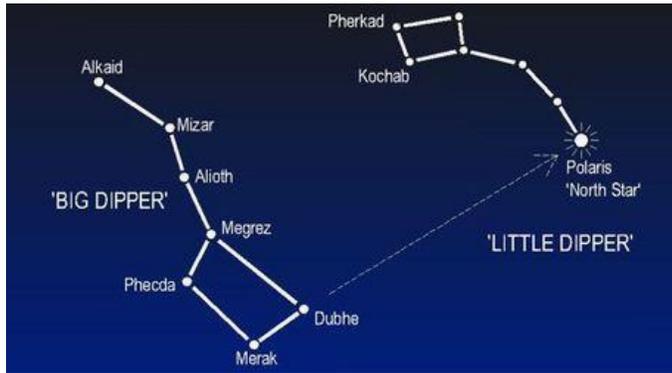
Look on a tree or fence post which has moss or lichen growing on it. Where it grows the highest, should be on the NORTH side (more moisture).

WILD LETTUCE

Lactuca Canadensis, is a tall, pale green plant with pale yellow flowers that are like small dandelions. It has leaves like dandelion leaves on the lower stem. It grows in woods and on woody roadsides. The leaves will face EAST.



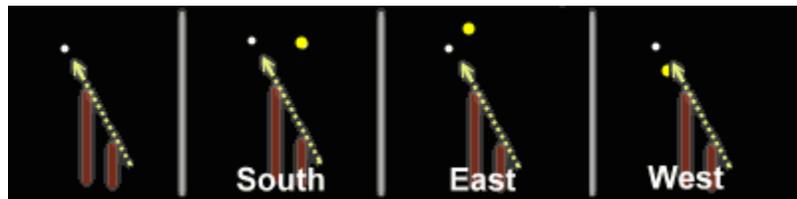
USING THE STARS



The Pole Star (Polaris) or North Star, is one star in the sky which does not appear to move. The other stars seem to revolve around it. If you are facing the Pole Star, you are **FACING NORTH**. The Pole Star is part of the Little Dipper constellation. Follow the last star of the Big Dipper to find the Pole Star in the Little Dipper.

Another way to use the stars is to lie down and drive one stick into the ground at eye level. Drive a second, taller stick into the ground behind it so that the tips of the sticks line up with a bright star. Watch the star for ten to fifteen minutes; if it seems to move...

- Up you are facing East
- Down you are facing West
- Right you are facing South
- Left you are facing North



Finding Your Way Without a Compass

A compass indicates the approximate direction of North. Early man, found methods of finding their way without a compass.

FINDING NORTH ON A SUNNY DAY

Find a stick, approximately one (1) meter in length, and pound it into the ground so it stands up on its own. The stick will cast a shadow onto the ground. Mark the tip of the shadow with a rock. Wait ten (10) minutes, then mark the new tip of the shadow with a rock. Draw a line between the two rocks. This line will run approximately west to east; with the second rock being EAST of the first rock. From this NORTH can be determined.



Another way to find NORTH on a sunny day is to lay an analog watch on the ground, with the hour hand pointing at the sun. Check this by placing a very thin stick or match upright at the edge of the watch where the hour hand is pointing. The shadow should fall along the hour hand. If it doesn't, turn the watch until it does.

IMPORTANT – if it is daylight savings time (usually April to October), turn the time back one hour first. When getting directions from the sun, you must be on standard time.

Saskatchewan does not practice daylight savings time and is therefore ALWAYS on standard time.

Halfway between the hour hand and twelve o'clock on the watch dial will be approximately SOUTH. Mark a line on the ground to indicate your north/south line. This method will work between 6 am and 6 pm standard time – as long as you can see the sun. Before 6 am and after 6 pm, halfway between the hour hand and twelve o'clock will indicate NORTH.

