

Consider the Trees

In her book, Beautiful Botanicals, Bente Starke King, talks about developing observational skills, observing each plant as if we had never seen it before. Trees and branched present great subject matter for doing that.

At this time of year, trees are budding, flowering but we rarely notice the flower, they are so small and delicate. A branch right now is full of amazing information on what happened last year and new buds that are forming.

I found this liquidamber branch on the trees that face my house. I draw the leaves (and you do too) every fall but never pay much attention to the spring buds which turn out to be fascinating and colorful too.



On a branch, look closely at:

- ❖ Nodes- the swollen part of the branch where the buds appear
- ❖ Leaf scars
- ❖ Dominant and side buds
- ❖ Old, gnarled growth (the messy part and fun to clarify and draw.)
- ❖ How the branch bends in slightly different directions at each node.
- ❖ Compare branches from different trees.

This time of year, many of the trees have limited foliage and as the days get warmer, you can spend some time drawing a tree outside with out having to worry about all those leaves. From Lee McCaffree's class I learned:

- ❖ Use your pencil or a ruler, measure with your arm outstretched and place the tree on your page.
- ❖ Measure the width in several place the same way. Make little marks on your page that when connected will form the outline of the tree. (Like drawing a leaf, stem first then outer edge.)
- ❖ Get the width of the trunk and the point where the first branches diverge.
- ❖ Add details. Have fun.

"...a work of art is a personal encounter with a reality, not a copy." ...Vincent Van Gogh