Note: this has been updated on 11/24/23 because the tree hints for Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve and Storment Hauss Nature Preserve were switched.

2023 Jingle Hike Challenge Tree and Location Hints

1. **Riverfront Park, Alton** - This tree has the best view as it sits among others like itself. It is on a path near a pavilion. *Need more help?* It is on the riverfront, between the Marina and the amphitheater.

   Tree Hint: This tree loves to be in soil with plenty of moisture, and it can be found in floodplains, swamps, and streambanks all over the eastern US. Its species name refers to the dark color the flaky bark becomes as the tree matures.

2. **Steve Bryant Community Park, Bethalto** - the tree is along the path. It is on the southside along the trail. A bench is nearby.

   Tree Hint: This tree can be found nationwide. It is a very resilient tree, able to withstand droughts in the summer and ice in the winter. The tree is also a very popular ornamental tree, as its purple-pink flowers create a wonderful splash of color every spring.

3. **Joe Glik Park, Edwardsville** - This tree is sitting pretty at a great lookout spot, where you can see the whole park. You can find a nice spot to sit just down the path from it.

   Tree Hint: This tree has thin, strand-like bark. It can often be found in swamps and on the edges of bodies of water. It usually has distinct root formations called pneumatophores that help it collect carbon dioxide from the air and provide it additional support.
4. **Drost Park, Maryville** - This tree is one of many looking out over the pond. You might see it on your way to play pickleball. This tree is next to a bench. Follow the path that goes around the pond clockwise from the parking lot.

Tree Hint: This tree is known for its leaves and yellow flowers, which share the same distinctive shape. Those flowers aren't just for show, either. They attract pollinators of all kinds! Aside from being a pretty ornamental tree, it's also used quite a bit in reforestation efforts because it grows so quickly, easily reaching heights of over 70 feet!

5. **Little Prairie Nature Trail, Carlyle** - There are two entrances to the trail - a wooded entrance and a prairie entrance. Enter through the wooded entrance. Follow the winding path, and cross a small bridge. Continue to follow the path, and you will find the tree on the left. Almost directly across from the tree off the right side of the path, you will see what looks like a gray, metal birdhouse tied to a tree.

Tree Hint: Not to be confused with its relative, the American Elm, this tree can easily be identified by its red to black fruits that ripen in October.

6. **Jaycee Park, Breese** - From the parking lot, walk west and down the peninsula. Cross the bridge, walk past the picnic table, and the tree is on the left beside the water.

Tree Hint: Like many of its relatives, this tree produces a special type of seed called a samara. This tree's leaves have a distinct five-lobe shape and a silvery underside that help to set it apart.

7. **St. Ellen Mine Park, Fairview Heights** - You can find many young trees by taking the winding path in the center of the park, but the tagged tree is on the outer loop/lower trail (you can reach it going left or right, but be sure you're on the park trail, not the bike trail). The tree is located by a trash bin.

Tree Hint: This tree species is noted for having hard, sturdy wood that is good for a variety of constructive uses. Unfortunately, it is also one of many species of trees that are facing a great danger in the form of an invasive green beetle called the Emerald Ash Borer, causing it to become critically endangered.
8. **Frank Holten State Park, Cahokia Heights** - The trail winds through a meadow and down towards the lake. The Jingle Hike tree is one of the larger specimens on the trail with bright white branches.

   Tree Hint: This tree species is known for its ability to grow to towering heights of up to one hundred feet. It also has broad leaves, spread out over a wide crown, making it a great source of shade. Looking at its bark, this species has two layers: an dark, flaky, outer layer and a stark, white, inner layer.

9. **Konarcik Park, Waterloo** - The tree is located between hole 9 and hole 10 of the frisbee golf course. Tree is located near the Tot Lot.

   Tree Hint: This tree species has a signature stringy bark ranging from gray to red-brown. Another feature that makes it stand out is its blue “berries,” which are actually cones.

10. **Storment Hauss Nature Preserve, Red Bud** - The tree is located between Locations 6 and 7 on the interpretive trail map.

   Tree Hint: You might find this tree familiar if you look around during the holiday season. This tree species has its needles in groups of five, and it is among the largest conifers in the region, growing up to one hundred fifty feet in height.

11. **Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve, Prairie du Rocher** - If you make it up the "devil's staircase" you are almost there.

   Tree Hint: This tree is a slow grower, but it lives a long life, up to three hundred years or more! Its acorns provide food sources for a wide variety of animals, including squirrels, deer, rabbits, turkeys, and ducks! You can tell this species apart by noting its lighter bark and deep, regularly lobed leaves.

12. **Confluence Trail, Modoc** - The tree is located near the amphitheater and fire ring. You will get to see the Kaskaskia and Mississippi River confluence if you get to this tree.

   Tree Hint: This species of tree has well-known, skinny leaves. It loves wet soil. It grows quickly and has a shallow root system that is great for slowing soil erosion.