

A Simple Key to Coniferous Trees

Trees that stay green in winter and have needles or scales are called conifers, also known as evergreens.

To use this key to identify common conifers, read the first pair of statements and chose the statement that matches the specimen you are looking at. Proceed to the statement indicated by the number. Eventually, the key will lead you to the identification.

1. If the needles are ½-inch to 18 inches, go to 2
1. If the needles are shorter, scale-like and overlap, go to 3

2. If the needles are in bundles (joined to the twigs in groups of 2 or more) go to 4.
2. If the needles are single, go to 5

3. If the scales are prickly, it's a RED CEDAR
3. If the scales are flat, not pointed or sharp, it's an ARBOR VITAE

4. If there are 5 needles in a bundle, it's a WHITE PINE
4. If there are 2 needles in a bundle it is a RED PINE

5. If the needles are thick and sharp (they may look blue), edges of the cone's scales are slightly feathery or scalloped, it's a BLUE SPRUCE
5. If the needles are more slender and deeper green, it is a NORWAY SPRUCE

