



Simple Leaf Key

The first characteristic you need to look at when identifying a tree is whether it has needles or broad leaves.

Needles may grow...

in bunches

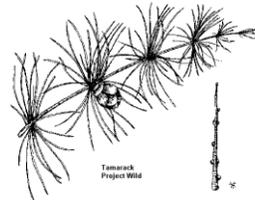
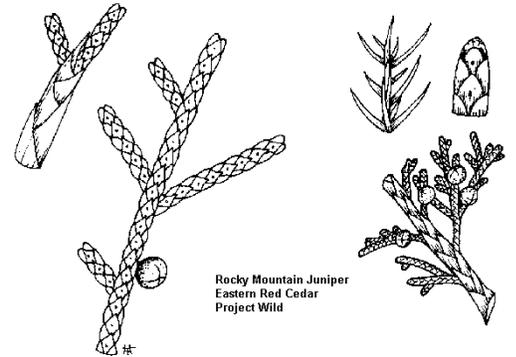
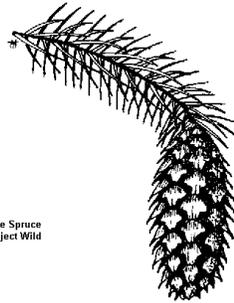
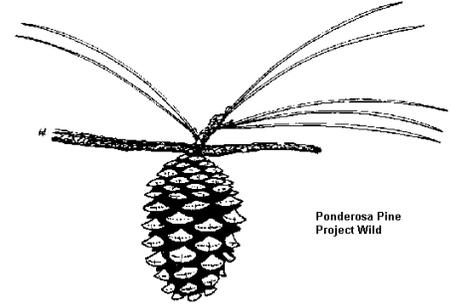
or

singly

or

like scales

or in whorls



Broad leaves may grow...

Opposite (across from each other) ...

or

Alternate (like steps going up)



Opposite



Alternate

Broad leaves may be...

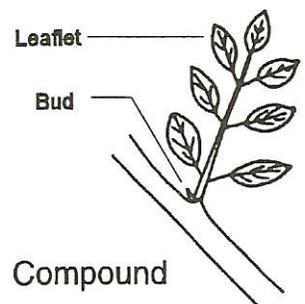
Simple (only one leaf blade)

or

Compound (more than one leaf blade – has leaflets)



Simple



HINT: Look for the bud at the base of the leaf.

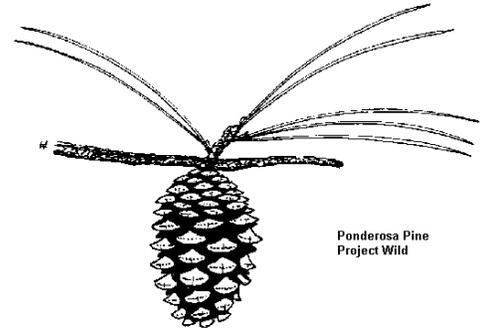
1a. Tree has needle-shaped or scale-like leaves Go to 2

1b. Tree has broad leaves Go to 5

2a. Needles grow in bunches Go to 3

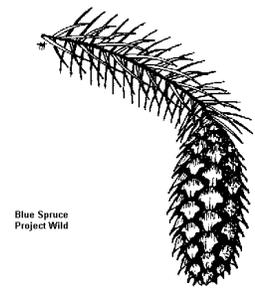
2b. Needles are single or scale-like Go to 4

3a. Tree has long needles, in bunches of 2 or 3 Ponderosa Pine

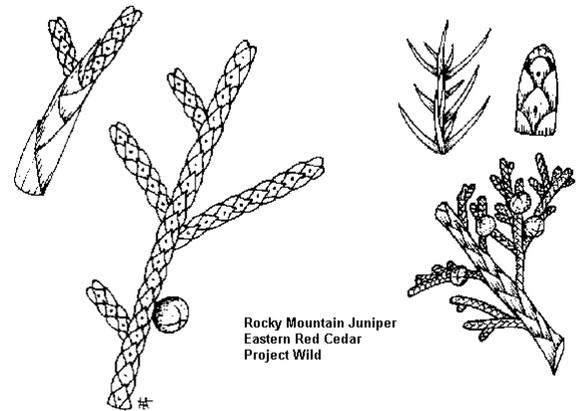


3b. Tree has short needles in bunches of two Scotch Pine
Bark near top of tree is orange.

4a. Tree has short needles growing singly Spruce
Cones hang down from branches.



4b. Leaves are scale-like. Juniper
Berries are green or blue.

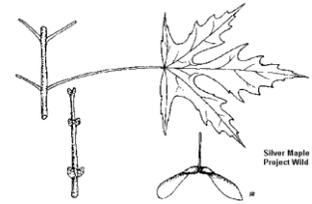


5a. Leaves are opposite Go to 6

5b. Leaves are alternate Go to 8

6a. Leaves are simple

Silver Maple

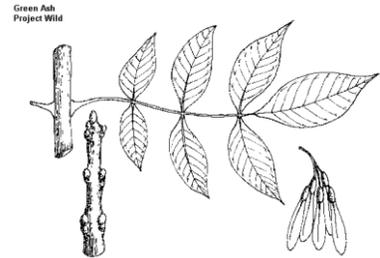


6b. Leaves are compound

Go to 7

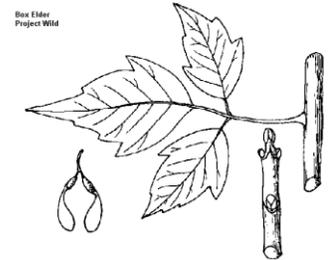
7a. Leaves have 5 or 7 leaflets

Green Ash



7b. Leaves have 3- or 5 leaflets
Twigs are green and waxy.

Box Elder

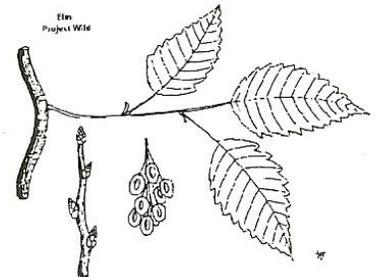


8a. Tree has thorns

Go to 9

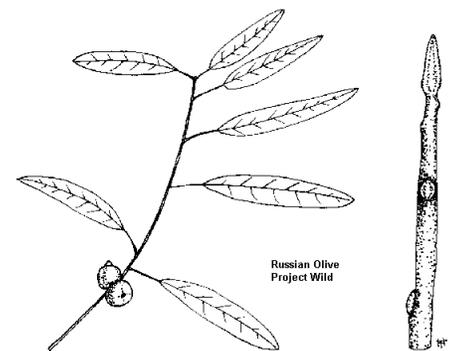
8b. Tree does not have thorns
Leaves are rough, like sandpaper and the
bottom (base) of the leaf is uneven.

American Elm



9a. Leaves are narrow with white/silver on bottom .
The tree looks silvery.

Russian Olive



9b. Leaves are not silvery and narrow. Fruit is
Large and purple when ripe.

Plum