

What Do Needles and Cones Tell You about a Tree?

Some trees have needles and some trees have leaves

One way to group trees is by the kind of leaves or needles they have. Some trees have needle-like or scale-like leaves that we call needles.



Needles are pretty amazing adaptations. They are long and thin. This shape slows down the evaporation process so the tree doesn't lose as much water. Because of this adaptation, trees with needles often don't need very much water and can grow in areas where other trees can't.

Can you identify these trees by their shape and needles?

Blue Spruce, Fraser Fir, Balsam Fir, Douglas Fir, Concolor Fir, Canaan Fir



Where are the seeds?

Trees that grow cones are in a group of trees called conifers. The cones of the conifers are very important because they are the place where the tree makes and shelters its seeds.



Cones are made up of many scales that shelter the seeds. When it is time, the scales of the cone open up and the seeds fall to the ground. The seeds will then work into the soil and grow into another tree.

Can you identify these cones?

Blue Spruce, Fraser Fir, Balsam Fir, Douglas Fir, Concolor Fir, White Pine



Needle ID answers (left to right, from top): Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir, Concolor Fir, Blue Spruce, Balsam Fir, and Canaan Fir.

Cone ID answers (from left to right): Top row - Blue Spruce and Concolor Fir, Middle row - White Pine and Fraser Fir, Bottom row - Douglas Fir and Balsam Fir.