

Northwest Conifers

Quick ID Guide

Low-elevation Conifers

These conifers grow at elevations below 2000 feet in northwest Oregon and western Washington. All but Sitka Spruce also grow at higher elevations.

Common Low-elevation Conifers



Douglas Fir
– *Pseudotsuga menziesii*
Needles: 1" long, thin, soft points, all around twig
Cones: 3-4" long, 3-pointed bracts
Bark: Brown, deep furrows on large trunks
Where: Below 5000 ft.



Grand Fir – *Abies grandis*
Needles: 1-2" long, flat & flattened on twig, white lines below
Cones: 3-4" long, upright at tree top, purple
Bark: Smooth, gray, small furrows on large trunks
Where: Below 5000 ft.



Western Hemlock
– *Tsuga heterophylla*
Needles: Short, flat, irregular, white lines below
Cones: 3/4" long, rounded scales
Bark: Gray, small deep furrows
Where: Below 4000 ft. in western Oregon and Washington



Western Red Cedar
– *Thuja plicata*
Leaves: Flat, scaled, white butterfly-like below
Cones: 1/2" long, rose-shaped
Bark: Brown, stringy
Where: Wet areas below 4000 ft.

Rare Low-elevation Conifers



Pacific Yew – *Taxus brevifolia*
Needles: Flat, flattened on twig, lighter green underneath
Fruit: Red berry-like aril
Bark: Thin gray scales over smooth red bark
Where: Wet shady areas below 5000 ft.



Ponderosa Pine
– *Pinus ponderosa*
Needles: Bundles of 3, 5-10" long
Cones: 3-6" long, egg shaped
Bark: Orange puzzle pieces
Where: Rare west of the Cascades. Common east of the Cascades to 5000 ft.

Conifers found on the Pacific Coast



Sitka Spruce – *Picea sitchensis*
Needles: Sharp, thin, flat, all around twig
Cones: 3" long, paper-thin scales
Bark: Gray, scaly
Where: Near coast and Columbia River



Lodgepole Pine – *Pinus contorta*
Needles: Bundles of 2, 1-3" long
Cones: 2" long, egg shaped
Bark: Dark gray, scaly
Where: Along the coast and above 3000 ft. in the mountains

Hi-elevation Conifers

These conifers grow above 2000 feet elevation in northwest Oregon and western Washington. All of the low-elevation conifers except Sitka Spruce also grow at higher elevations.

Common Hi-elevation Conifers



Noble Fir – *Abies procera*

Needles: Bent like hockey sticks

Cones: 4-6" long, upright at tree top, whiskery bracts

Bark: Gray-brown scaly plates

Where: Above 2000 ft. in western Oregon and Washington



Mountain Hemlock

– *Tsuga mertensiana*

Needles: Short, flat, spread in all directions

Cones: 2" long, rounded scales

Bark: Gray, small deep furrows

Where: Above 4000 ft.

Has drooping top.



Pacific Silver Fir

– *Abies amabilis*

Needles: Point up & forward, white lines below

Cones: 3-6" long, upright at treetop

Bark: Smooth, gray scaly plates

Where: Above 2000 ft. in western Oregon and Washington



Subalpine Fir

– *Abies lasiocarpa*

Needles: Curved upward, white lines above & below

Cones: 2-4" long, upright at tree top, purple

Bark: Smooth, gray

Where: Above 4000 ft.

Other High-elevation Conifers



Western White Pine

– *Pinus monticola*

Needles: Bundles of 5, 2-4" long

Cones: 6-10" long, curved

Bark: Dark gray scaly plates

Where: 2000-5000 ft.



Whitebark Pine

– *Pinus albicaulis*

Needles: Bundles of 5, 1-3" long

Cones: 2-3" long, closed when mature

Bark: Light gray, scaly

Where: At the timberline



Engelmann Spruce

– *Picea engelmannii*

Needles: Sharp, thin, 4-sided, all around twig

Cones: 3" long with paper-thin scales

Bark: Gray, scaly

Where: Above 3000 ft.



Incense Cedar

– *Calocedrus decurrens*

Needles: Long, flat scales

Cones: 1" long, shaped like a duck's bill

Bark: Brown, deep furrows

Where: Dry areas of Cascades



Western Larch

– *Larix occidentalis*

Needles: Bundles of 25, 1-2" long

Cones: 1-2" long, whiskery bracts

Bark: Flaky scales, furrowed

Where: Cascades, up to 6000 ft.



Alaska Cedar

– *Callitropsis nootkatensis*

Needles: Flat, scaled, prickly

Cones: Round, 3/8"

Bark: Gray-brown, shreddy strips

Where: Above 3000 ft.