



LAKEHEAD REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

TREMENDOUS TREES



CASCADES CONSERVATION AREA



In the Lakehead Region we are fortunate to have both **conifers** and **deciduous trees**. But what exactly are coniferous trees and deciduous trees?

Conifers are **cone bearing** trees that generally have **needles or scales** as their leaves. These cones hold the seeds of the tree. These trees are sometimes called evergreens because they keep their green leaves through the winter, well, most of them. The Tamarack tree is an exception, as unlike the other conifers, its leaves are not coated with a waxy coating that protects the leaf to keep it from drying out.

Deciduous trees have **broad leaves that turn colour and fall off** in the autumn. These trees have **pollen, seeds, or fruit**.

When we explore the trail at Cascades we can get to know the trees here by name if we take the time to look more closely at their leaves.

Using an **identification key** or a **field guide** can really help.

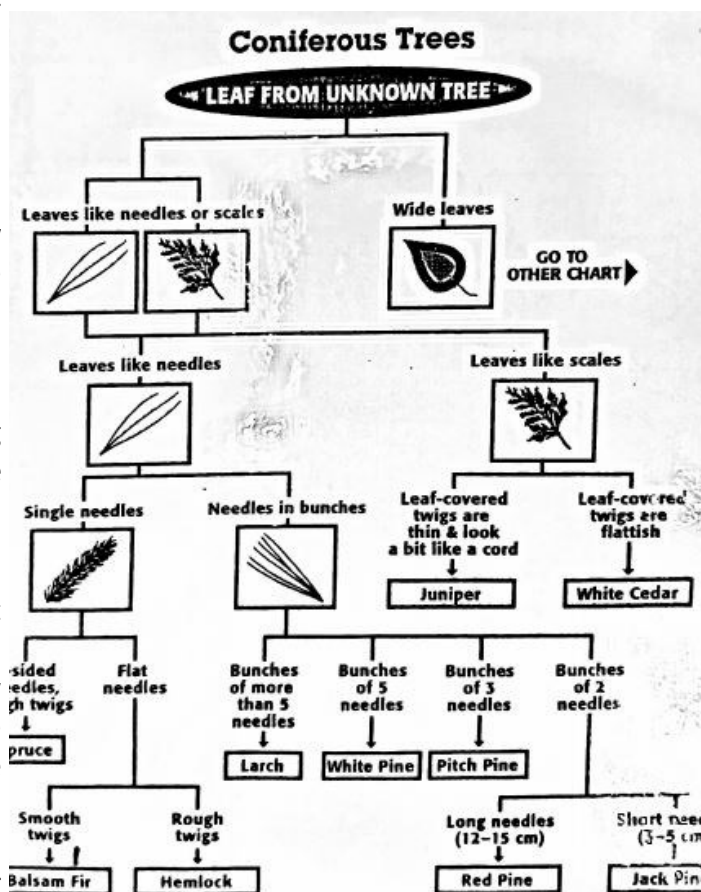
When looking at a sample of a conifer we can start by asking if the leaves are like **needles or scales**? Then, are they single needles or bunches of needles and if bunches, how many in the bunch? And are the needles flat or round?

When looking at a sample of a deciduous tree we can start by asking if the **leaves** are simple / whole or compound (made of many leaflets). If they are compound then how many leaflets are there, and are they opposite or alternate of each other on the twig. If they are simple leaves then are they alternate or opposite on a twig, are they lobed like an oak, and what do the edges or margins of the leaf look like?



Let's use this leaf on the left to practice our identification skills. This leaf is a broad simple leaf and from a deciduous tree. I see that the leaves alternate on the twig and are slightly heart shaped, The edge/ margin of the leaf is finely toothed. When I look up at the tree it fell from the leaves are waving at me even though there is little wind. This leaf is from a Trembling Aspen tree.

Tree species you are likely to find in the Lakehead Watershed are: White and Black Spruce, Red, White and Jack Pine, Cedar, Tamarack, Balsam Fir, White Birch, Balsam Poplar, Trembling Aspen, Sugar Maple, Bur Oak, Black Ash.





Not only are you learning about trees while out here but spending as little as 20min in nature helps **improve your mental health**.

As many of us know **trees are an important part of our environment** and provide all life with oxygen to breath, while taking up carbon dioxide. Trees also provide an important role of holding soil in place to prevent erosion and improving water quality. Trees improve our health, provide us with food, and also increase the value of where we live and shop. Trees help save us heating and cooling energy costs in our buildings and significantly reduce the risk and effects of flooding.

Challenge: Get to know a tree

Use your senses and actions to get to know one tree. Either share your thoughts with those you are with, write down notes, or keep your discoveries to yourself.

Trees are very magical beings. They can talk to each other, adapt to their environment, and provide life for other living things. When we are with trees we can feel their energy.

Head outside and pick a tree that you like. Walk up to it. Notice how the tree makes you feel. Walk around it and look up at the branches, down the trunk and all the way down to the roots. What activity is happening on it? What animals/ insects/ birds have you seen on this kind of tree before? Move like our tree. Smell the tree then try to describe the smell. What does the bark look and feel like? Look for any fungi, lichen or moss on the tree. How do those look, feel, and smell. Who might eat parts of the tree? What things are beautiful about your tree? How does the tree change throughout the seasons? Hug the trees. Did it hug you back? How big is the tree? One hand around, two hands around, one hug around..? Listen to the trees. What do you hear? How old do you think the tree is and why?

Every Year the tree grows in 3 ways.

Up: New shoots push out of the buds at the tips of branches and twigs. This causes the twigs to grow longer and the tree to grow taller. Reach your arms up and out wide.

Out: A new layer of wood forms underneath the bark of the trunk and branches. This makes the trunk and branches get thicker. Use your arms to make yourself grow out wider and spin.

Down: Most of the tree's roots are underground and the roots spread wider and deeper. Stomp your feet.

Observe your tree in preparation for drawing it. Notice where the branches start growing out of the trunk, and how many trunks? What do the buds look like? What do the leaves/ needles look like? How would you describe or draw the tree's overall shape? **Draw a zoomed out picture of your tree, and a zoomed in picture or two.**

