



Leaflet

Activity sheets are available from the info boxes.

❖ What is in Bloom?

Persian Ironwood (*Parrotia persica*)

This deciduous small tree is related to the witch hazels. Its small red blooms are hard to notice, but pretty when observed close-up. This species tolerates clay soil, has interesting peeling bark and orange-red fall color. Native to northern Iran. Our young tree is between the stone bridge and the lower stepping stones.



Fun fact: Ironwood is a common name for a large number of woods with a reputation for hardness. They are also very dense and do not float in water. The density of Persian ironwood is 0.9–1.05 g per cm³ (water's density is 1 g per cm³).

1

Witch Hazels



H. vernalis is on the right side of the path a bit north of the stone bridge and two hybrid witch hazels are at the south end of the park.

Witch hazels are deciduous shrubs with red, yellow or orange, often fragrant blooms and beautiful orange-red fall color. They are deer

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resistant and clay soil tolerant. The hybrids are crosses between the Japanese (*H. japonica*) and the Chinese (*H. mollis*) witch hazels.

Our native common witch hazel (*H. virginiana*) has yellow blooms in late fall, and the Ozark witch hazel (*H. vernalis*) has orange flowers in early spring. All witch hazels are deciduous, but Ozark witch hazel retains its brown leaves throughout the winter, which makes it harder to notice the flowers in the spring.

Fun fact: The fruit splits explosively at maturity in the fall, ejecting the seeds with enough force to fly them up to 33 ft away, thus another name "Snapping Hazel".



❖ English ivy – *Hedera helix*

English ivy is an evergreen vine that is often planted as a groundcover. It climbs up onto walls and seen on older buildings. Some people believe it gives the buildings old world charm. Opinions are divided on whether ivy damages the structures or not. Ivy may not damage buildings that are in good conditions, but certainly can grow into existing cracks. You can read more about ivy on structures here: <http://www.todayshomeowner.com/can-ivy-damage-the-brick-or-wood-on-your-home/>

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English ivy is a very aggressive groundcover. It can spread into natural areas and outcompete native plants. While it creates a dense cover, its roots are very shallow and do not provide good erosion control.

When ivy grows up onto trees, it starts producing berries. These berries are consumed and spread by birds. Ivy blocks sunlight from the tree, and may girdle trees as it grows around the trunk. It is very heavy and can cause structural imbalance making trees less stable, and more likely to fall.

Luckily, it is easy, although time consuming, to control English ivy. The shallow roots make it relatively easy to pull from the ground and roll up like a carpet, especially when soil is moist. To control English ivy on trees, remove a 2 ft section all around the trunk. Herbicide used on the freshly cut stem can accelerate the process and help control ivy in hard to



reach areas, like under a deck, or fence, where pulling is difficult. Don't forget to wear gloves and wash them after each use.

Replace English ivy with non-invasive species as soon as possible, especially when erosion can be a problem.

❖ Conifers by their cones

Conifers (Gymnosperms) are cone-bearing plants. They reproduce by seeds, but the seeds are not enclosed in an ovule, as in angiosperm plants. Gymnosperm means "naked seed". Cones come in different shapes and sizes and some gymnosperms do not have cones at all. Here is a list of some of the common genera:

Larches lose all their leaves in the fall (are deciduous) and have small cones that are upright on the branches.

Spruces have needles arranged in a spiral around the branches, and their cones are hanging down. Sizes vary by species.

Pines have needles arranged in groups of 2 or 5. Their cones hang down on the branches, too. The scales in the cones are thick and rigid.

Real cedars (*Cedrus* genus) has cones that are upright, but when ripe they fall apart. So only pieces of the cones can be found on the ground, not whole cones like with other conifers.

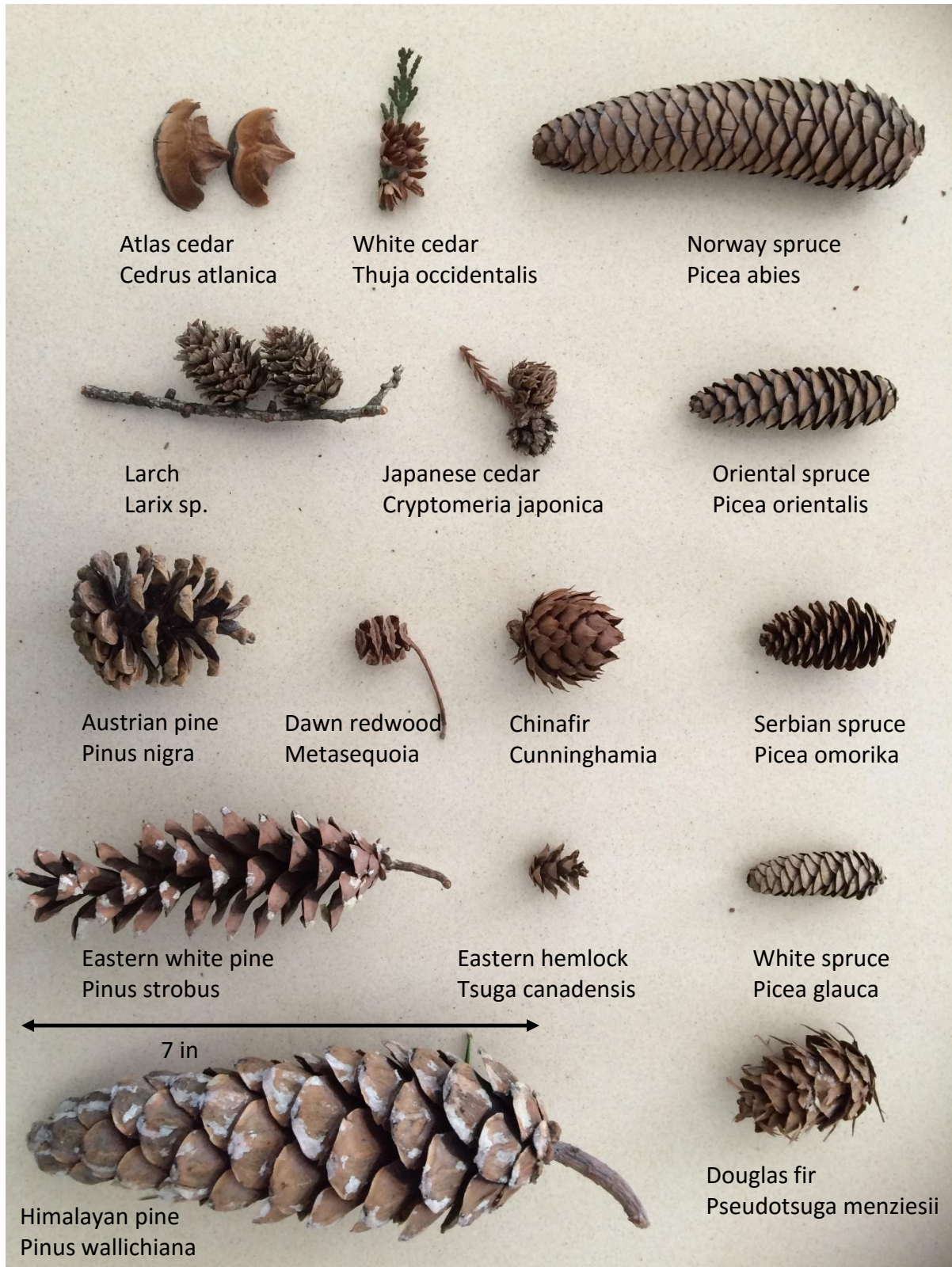
Firs have needles arranged similarly to spruces, but needles have rounded tips. The leaves leave a round mark when pulled off the twig. Their cones grow erect and close to the top of the tree, and fall apart when seeds are ripe.

Douglas fir has cones that are hanging down, and it falls down in one piece. The cones have long, papery "tongues" that stick out between the scales.

Yews are conifers, but have seeds with a red fleshy outer layer making them look like berries, instead of cones. They are poisonous. Junipers also have berry-like seeds.

Arborvitae/cedar (*Thuja*), dawn redwoods, Japanese cedar, hemlock and Chinafir all have small, but very different shaped cones.





(Cones of various conifers from around the neighborhood)

