

Tree Identification Guide

Sequoia National Forest

Giant Sequoia National Monument

Everywhere you look in Sequoia National Forest you see pine trees... or do you? There are actually nine common cone-bearing trees, or conifers, in this forest, of which five are pines. To tell them and other conifer trees apart you can look at the size and shape of the cones, the type and number of needles, and the color and texture of the bark.

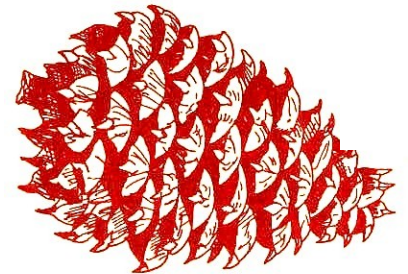
Sugar Pine – This is the largest species of pine in the world and it is readily recognized by the impressive cones hanging from the tips of its branches. These are the longest of pinecones and are 18-22” long. The tree gets its common name from the sweetness of its sap, which oozes from wounds in the bark and hardens into a chewable gummy substance. Its needles are grouped in bunches of five like the western white pine.



Lodgepole Pine – This pine’s name comes from its long slender trunk which Native Americans used to make teepees. Its needles come in bunches of two.

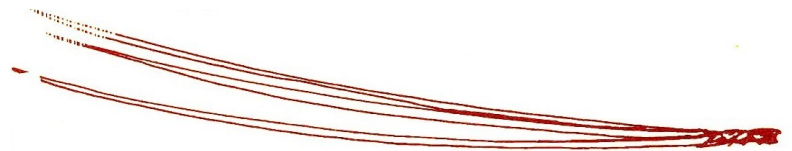
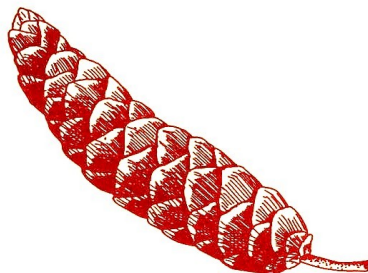


Jeffrey Pine – Similar to the ponderosa pine, the Jeffrey pine’s bark has a vanilla smell. The cone is larger than the ponderosa pine (5-15 inches long) but with spines turned in “Gentle Jeffrey.” It has needles in bunches of three.



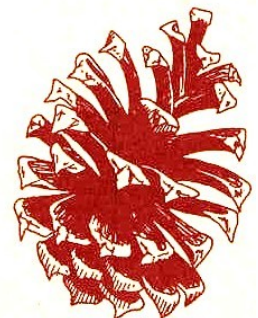
Western White Pine –

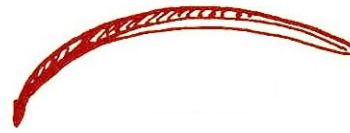
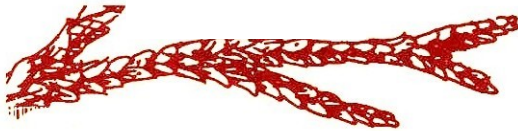
The western white cone is similar to a sugar pine, only smaller. Its needles are grouped in bunches of five like the sugar pine. It typically grows at higher elevations than the sugar pine. It can be found growing up to 10,500’ whereas the sugar pine typically stops growing at 7,500’.



Ponderosa Pine –

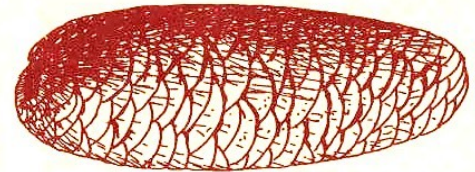
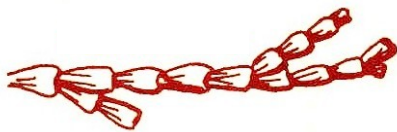
Also known as yellow pine, the ponderosa has needles in bunches of three like the Jeffrey Pine. The bark of a mature tree is a pale orange, unlike that of any other local conifer. The cone can be remembered as “prickly ponderosa.”





Giant Sequoia – The namesake of the forest and the largest tree on Earth, the giant sequoia is an impressive tree. It does not have a very large cone. It is about the size and shape of a chicken egg. Its needles are similar to an incense cedar but are rounded and prickly to the touch. Sequoia bark is red and is soft and shreds easily.

White Fir – The white fir can be distinguished from its neighbors by its whitish-gray bark and its small, upright cones. The greenish cones are a favorite among chickarees (Douglas squirrels) who cut and store them for winter food. The needles do not come in bunches like a pine.



Incense Cedar – Many mistake incense cedar trees for small giant sequoia trees. They, however, do not produce a traditional shaped cone. Instead their seeds are on six cone scales that form a pod-like cone that splits when it dries. Their needles, though scale-like, are flattened and not prickly. Their bark, though red like a sequoia, is hard and doesn't shred.

Red Fir – This is the largest species of fir in the world. It can be distinguished from the white fir by the reddish undertone of its bark and its longer barrel-shaped cones. It also grows at a higher elevation than the white fir, typically above 6,500'.

**For More Information, please contact:
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