



WINTER | Plants

Tree Time: Coniferous Versus Deciduous

Summary:

Did you know that there are two main types of trees? One is called **coniferous** and the other **deciduous**. In winter, it's easier to spot the difference between the two. Can you?

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: Notebook, pencil, magnifying glass, and a map of the United States.

Explore: *A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains* by Thomas Cole. Can you spot two types of trees in this picture?

Read: *Leaves* by David Ezra Stein

In the Garden:

Sometimes, it takes the absence of color and greenery to more clearly see the differences in the plants around us. There are two main types of trees that we see in our neighborhoods, coniferous—trees that have cones, such as a pine tree, and long thin leaves known as needles—and deciduous—trees that have broad leaves that they lose during the fall.

Questions to Explore:

- Look at your map. What part of the country do you live in? There are more conifers in the west and more deciduous in the east.
- Describe the trees in and around your garden.
- Can you find any pine cones or needles on the ground? To what tree do they belong?
- Do you see any leaves on trees or on the ground? Do they look the same or different than the needles?

Activity:

1. Deciduous trees are often associated with good soil because it takes so many nutrients for the trees to regrow leaves each season. Let's explore our neighborhood and try to determine if the soil is rich or rocky.
2. Take your notebook, pencil, and camera on a hike around the neighborhood and garden.
3. Create two columns in your notebook, one for each tree type, and make a mark in either column for each tree you find in the neighborhood.
4. You can also document the different types of trees by drawing their shapes and using a magnifying glass to explore the different characteristics of each tree type.
5. At the end of your walk, tally up your tree columns. Do you have more coniferous or deciduous trees? From your numbers, can you guess what kind of soil is in your neighborhood?

Beyond the Garden | Explore Your Family Tree

Talk with your growing gardener about your family history and roots. Bring out family photos or mementos that have stories and spend time learning about the fun things that make you a family. Remember, families come in all shapes and sizes. A family is the people you go through life with and it is always good to remind growing gardeners of how many people love and care for them.

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Tree ID: <https://www.arboday.org/trees/whattree/>