

## Tree knowledge

The best way to identify a tree is to observe its general silhouette, along with the shape of its leaves, needles, fruit, seeds and bark. Trees have specific distinguishing features that facilitate species identification. For instance, you have probably noticed that [conifers](#) do not look the same as [broadleaf trees](#).

The typical characteristics of a tree species may be altered by environmental stress, which can inhibit the normal growth of a tree. Wind and insects, for example, can cause stress. In very windy areas, it is not unusual to see trees with branches on one side only, or bent over. This is often seen in trees by the sea shore. Trees may be attacked by insects which feed on the edges of the leaves, altering the shape of the leaves. Bark texture varies with the age of the tree. Young trees often have very smooth bark. And bark too can be damaged by insects, or even humans. When observing a tree, look carefully to determine whether any of its characteristics has been modified by the environment. Being observant is key to a successful identification.

In this section, you will learn to:

- Describe the silhouette of trees
- Recognize leaf arrangements
- Classify tree leaves according to common properties

You will also find out how to identify trees by their bark, fruit and seeds. You'll see, it's a lot of fun!

