

Maine Forest Service - Tree ID Tips

Tree: woody stem, single stem, >20 feet tall (~70 species in Maine)

Shrub: multiple stems, <20' tall

Native species: grows here in the wild, regenerates on its own

Exotic: not native (introduced or escaped)

Invasive: not native, outcompetes native species, no/few predators

Cultivar: horticultural variety

Characters to look for: *not all are “diagnostic”*

Needle-leaved trees:

- length of needles
- shape of needles (rounded, square, flat), sharp/blunt
- attach to the twig individually or in bundles (or on spurs)
- number of needles in a bundle

Broadleaved trees:

- simple or compound (many leaflets on one leaf stem)
- leaf or leaflet shape
 - round, oval, narrow
 - tip, base
 - lobed (lobe & “sinus”; palmately or pinnately lobed)
- leaf edge or “margin” – toothed or wavy or smooth
- vein pattern
- leaf surface – rough, smooth, glossy

Also:

- branch arrangement – opposite, alternate, whorled
- color, smell
- outer bark, inner bark
- twigs, buds (esp. in winter!!)
- fruits/seeds/cones
- overall tree shape
- site/soils
- **WOOD**

“MADCAP Horse” –
opposite branching

M – maples

A – ashes

D – dogwoods

Cap – Caprifoliaceae

(honeysuckles, viburnums,
elderberries)

Horsechestnut (buckeye)

Common Trees in Maine & Northern New England:

White pine

Red pine

Balsam fir

Red spruce

White spruce

Hemlock

Northern white cedar

Tamarack

White ash

Brown/black ash

American beech

Black cherry

Quaking aspen

Bigtooth aspen

Basswood

American Elm

Red maple

Sugar maple

Silver maple

Striped maple (moosewood)

Red oak

White oak

Bur oak

White birch

Yellow birch

Grey birch

Some Woody Shrubs:

Hazelnut

Alder

Willows

Hawthorns

Sumac

Viburnums

Dogwoods

Elderberry

Winterberry holly

Juniper

Bayberry

Sweetfern

Vaccinium (blueberry, cranberry, etc.)

Honeysuckles

Buckthorns

Raspberry/Blackberry

Currant/Gooseberry

(This is just a sample of the most common species of trees and some of the shrubs in Maine. NOTE: a few of these groups include invasive species!!)

Morten Moesswilde

District Forester, Maine Forest Service

Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Kennebec counties

536 Waldoboro Road

Jefferson, Maine 04348

t: 207.441.2895

e: morten.moesswilde@maine.gov