

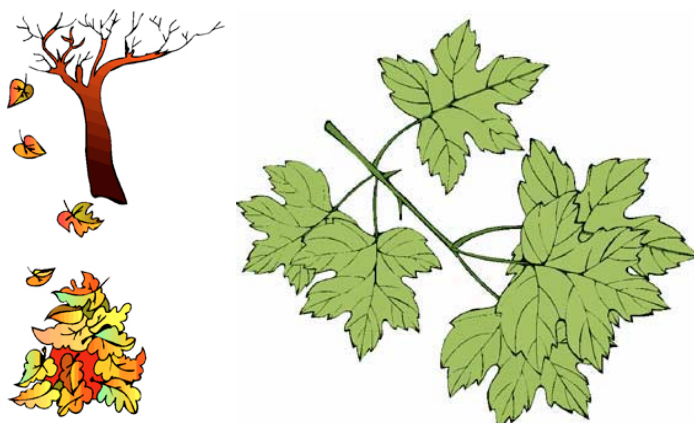
TREES – Deciduous & Evergreen

In the Trial Issue (2005) of Nature's Web, we briefly mentioned the difference between evergreen and deciduous trees. To tie in with the theme of tree conservation on page 14, here's a little more information on the subject!

Evergreen trees, as their name suggests, keep their leaves all year round. **Deciduous** trees usually lose their leaves in autumn, sending out new shoots and leaves in the spring.

DECIDUOUS TREES

Deciduous trees are generally thought of as **broadleaf** trees, meaning that they have broad, flat leaves eg sycamore. They are also considered to be **hardwood** trees. Usually these trees take longer to grow, their wood is harder and has good preservative qualities. Their wood generally lasts longer, is harder to work with and more expensive. A deciduous forest is a forest made up of trees that will drop their leaves in autumn. These leaves will rot, producing a rich carpet of soil on which plants can feed. Therefore deciduous forests are full of plants and animal life.



EVERGREEN TREES

When we talk about evergreen trees, we usually think of **conifers**, which are trees that have needle-like leaves eg pine trees. However there are also evergreen trees that have broad, flat leaves. The wood of a conifer tree is known as **softwood**. Generally, softwood is easy to work with and this is what we mostly use in our houses for flooring, doors etc... Also, conifers grow more quickly and more upright than deciduous trees, which has led to the planting of plantations of coniferous forests purely to provide wood for our use.



The narrow leaf of the conifer has a small surface area and is therefore able to stop water loss. This helps it grow in cold climates and poor soils.

An evergreen, or coniferous forest, is a forest made up of pine trees that are always in leaf. They do not shed leaves, except for a few pine needles to make way for new ones. These fallen needles have very little nutrients and make very poor soil. Not many plants grow in these forests and so fewer animals and plants are found there.



THE AGE OF A TREE

When a tree is cut down, or felled, you can tell how old it is by counting the number of rings on its stump. Each ring records one year of growth.

Hard softwoods & soft hardwoods!

To totally confuse you, not all hardwoods are harder than softwoods. Some softwoods, such as yew, are really hard!

