



Identifying Trees and Shrubs



Learning Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

- Using a plant key, identify common landscape trees and shrubs.

References / Supplemental Reading

- **CMG GardenNotes** available on-line at www.cmg.colostate.edu
 - #122 Taxonomic Classification
 - #171 Identifying Trees and Shrubs
 - #172 Identifying Conifers
 - #173 Identifying Broadleaf Flowering Trees and Shrubs

 - #174 Worksheet: Identifying Conifers
 - #175 Worksheet: Identifying Broadleaf Trees and Shrubs

 - #176 Key to Identifying Common Landscape Trees and Shrubs of Colorado
- **Books**
 - *Colorado Flora, Eastern Slope.* William Weber and Ronald Wittman
 - *Colorado Flora, Western Slope.* William Weber and Ronald Wittman
 - *Gardener's Latin: A Lexicon.* Bill Neal.
 - *Hortus Third* or *Hortus Fourth*
 - *Identification Key for Woody Plants of the Pikes Peak Region.* Colorado State University Extension, El Paso County
 - *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, Sixth Edition.* Michael A. Dirr. Stipes. 1998
 - *Trees and Shrubs of Colorado.* Jack L. Carter
 - *Winter Guide to Central Rocky Mountain Shrubs.* Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. 1976

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- **Web**

- *International Plant Name Index* at www.ipni.org/
 - *Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Resource Page* at www.kew.org./data/subjects.html
 - *USDA Plant Data Base* at <http://plants.usda.gov/>

 - Several web-based sites offer pronunciation guides for plant names. For example, <http://www.finegardening.com/pguide/pronunciation-guide-to-botanical-latin.aspx>

 - *Key to Identifying Common Landscape Trees of Colorado*, CMG GardenNotes #156, at www.cmg.colostate.edu/TreeID/156.html
 - *What Tree Is This?* National Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org/trees/index-identification.cmf
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Class Review Questions: Identifying Trees and Shrubs

1. Who is Linnaeus? Why is he important to plant taxonomy?
2. All plant families end in ‘aceae.’ List five families not listed in your Garden Notes and note some important plant family members.
3. What is the difference between a variety and a cultivar? Research for and name two plant varieties found in the plant trade; name two cultivars.
4. Why is Latin used for all scientific plant names?
5. Why is it important to try to use scientific names whenever possible? What challenges are there with using common names?
6. What important tools do you need in order to do plant identification?
7. If a customer is on the phone and wants to know what his/her tree is, what questions should you ask in order to determine its identity?
8. Briefly explain how a plant identification key is used.
9. When using some plant keys, you must know if the plant is *evergreen* or *deciduous*. What do these terms mean?
10. What is the difference between *opposite* and *alternate* leaf arrangement? Name three trees/shrubs that have opposite and alternate leaf arrangements.
11. Define the terms *legume*, *samara* and *pome*. Give examples of plants that bear these types of fruit.
12. If you are unsure if the sample you are identifying is a leaf or leaflet, what key feature should you look for on the branch?