

Planting For Change: Tree Species Key



Introduction

This booklet is designed to assist in the identification of tree species planted in the Planting for Change plots. Distinguishing characteristics such as shapes of leaves or colour of twigs are listed, in order to easily identify trees in the field.

For more information, please visit:

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Basswood



Basswood trees often grow in clumps that originate from stump sprouts. They are a species of relatively large tree, growing up to 35m in height. They can most commonly be found

in Northern Temperate Zones, surrounded by Sugar Maple and Beech trees.

Bark:

- Young Basswood trees have light greenish-gray, smooth bark
- Mature trees have darker gray-brown bark with long, flat-topped ridges

Buds:

- Semi-oval
- Reddish in colour
- Hairless

Leaves:

- Alternate pairing
- Simple
- Toothed
- Heart Shaped

Twigs:

- Yellowish – brown
- Hairless



Bur Oak



Bur Oak trees are resistant to both fire and drought. They are a species of generally small trees, growing up to 15m in height. Bur Oak trees can be found from Southern Saskatchewan to New

Brunswick.

Acorns:

- Roughly half of the acorn is in a scaly cup, bordered by a hairy fringe

Bark:

- Rough
- Ridges broken into irregular, rough scales

Buds:

- Terminal buds
- Blunt pointed
- Brown and hairy

Leaves:

- Alternate pairing
- Broad toothed, variable in shape

Twigs:

- Yellowish – brown
- Stout
- Somewhat hairy



Common Hoptree



The Common Hoptree is a species of deciduous shrubs or small trees, growing to a height of 8m. This species is native to North America, but not common in Canada

and can only be found in areas of Southwestern Ontario.

Bark:

- Reddish brown
- Young bark is smooth
- Mature bark becomes rougher with age

Buds:

- Lateral buds
- Erupt through a leaf scar in the spring

Leaves:

- Alternate Pairing
- Compound – composed of 3 leaflets on a central stalk
- Wide middle, with sharp tip



Twigs:

- Slender
- Yellowish to reddish brown

Sugar Maple



The Sugar Maple tree is Canada's National Tree as a stylized version of the maple leaf is present on our flag and currency. Sugar Maple trees are medium to

large in size, growing up to 35m in height. They can be found in Southern Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime provinces.

Bark:

- Young trees have smooth, gray bark
- Mature trees have bark that is irregular and rigid, often curling at one side

Buds:

- Terminal bud
- Narrow and cone shaped
- Medium to dark brown

Leaves:

- Oppositely paired
- 5 lobes
- In autumn leaves turn vivid red, orange or yellow



Twigs:

- Reddish brown to green
- Shiny
- Hairless

White Spruce



White Spruce trees have considerable genetic diversity within the species. They can be found throughout most forested regions of Canada,

except on the Pacific coast. They are a medium sized species of trees, growing up to 25m in height.

Bark:

- Young trees have smooth, light gray bark
- Mature trees have darker gray, scaly bark

Buds:

- Ovoid
- Blunt pointed
- Tight fitting scales

Needles:

- Straight and stiff
- 4 sided
- Green to bluish-green



Twigs:

- Light greenish-gray, often tinged with orange or purple
- Shiny
- Hairless

Note on Tree Keys

A Tree Key is a tool used to identify a species of trees based on variances in a particular category, such as leaves.

Tree Keys ask a series of questions about a specific characteristic in order to pinpoint individual species.

Species of trees with a clearly identifiable characteristic will usually be identified early in the key, whereas species with less obvious attributes are identified later in the key.

A simplified version of a Tree Key can be found on the next two pages of this booklet. In order to use the keys, read over the question and evaluate your specimen.

If the tree has the characteristic in question, follow the corresponding line to obtain the name of the species. However, if the tree does not possess that characteristic, proceed to the next question.

Tree Key - By Leaves

1. Does the tree have:
 - a) Needles? White Spruce
 - b) Broad Leaves? 2

2. Are the leaves arranged in:
 - a) Opposite Pairs? Sugar Maple
 - b) Alternate Pairs? 3

3. Are the leaves:
 - a) Compound? Hoptree
 - b) Simple? 4

4. Are the leaf margins:
 - a) Lobed? Bur Oak
 - b) Toothed? Basswood

Tree Key – By Young Bark

1. Is the bark:
 - a) Scaly? White Spruce
 - b) Smooth?2

2. Is the smooth bark:
 - a) Ridged? Bur Oak
 - b) Not Ridged?3

3. Are the lenticels:
 - a) Obvious horizontal marks? ... Hoptree
 - b) Not obvious?4

4. Is the colour of the bark:
 - a) Dark Gray? Basswood
 - b) Medium Gray? Sugar Maple

Glossary

Compound: Compound leaves have two or more leaflets growing from a central stalk

Exotic Species: A species found growing in an area that it is not its natural state
- exotic species are typically present due to human interference

Lenticels: Gas exchange pores present on the bark of a tree

Lobed: Lobed leaves refer to leaves that are comprised of several lobes rather than one continuous shape

Native Species: A plant growing in a particular habitat, and appears to be present in its natural state

Ovoid: An ovoid shape resembles that of an egg

Simple: Simple leaves are comprised of a single leaf growing from a single stalk

Toothed: Toothed leaves have jagged, irregular edges

REFERENCES

Bissonnette, Dan. 2009. *Native Seed Identification & Cultivation Guide*. Windsor: The Naturalized Habitat Network

Farrar Laird, John. 2006. *Trees in Canada*. Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited.



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