

What are broadleaf and conifer trees?

When we make things from wood we need to know what type to use. There are two main types of wood: hardwood and softwood. These come from two different types of trees; hardwood is produced by broadleaf trees and softwood from conifer trees.

Our tree packs have native broadleaf tree species in them and therefore the timber they will produce will be a hardwood. Broadleaf tree species such as oak, hazel and cherry are used to make furniture because their hardwood timber is strong and attractive. Oak is also good for use outdoors because it lasts for a long time.

Our tree packs do not have any conifer tree species in them. If you see a conifer growing in your school grounds, or where you live, it will produce softwood timber. Conifer tree species such as Norway spruce, Scots pine and Douglas fir are used to make many things such as paper, fences and buildings. Norway spruce is also a popular species for Christmas trees!

To use trees and wood we have specific words to describe them. Diagram 1 shows that all tree species are divided into two different types of trees; conifer and broadleaf.

Diagram 1: Tree and wood words

**Plant
classification
name:**

Gymnosperm

Angiosperm

**Type of
tree:**

conifer
tree

broadleaf
tree

**Type of
wood:**

mostly
softwoods

mostly
hardwoods

Leaves:

Deciduous
(drop their leaves
in winter)

evergreen
(keeps their leaves
all year)

Deciduous
(drop their leaves
in winter)

evergreen
(keeps their leaves
all year)

Example:

larch

Scots
pine

oak

holly



Activity 1: Who am I?

You will need:

A pen or pencil

Diagram 1 of tree and wood words

Use the tree and wood words diagram for this activity. Read the descriptions below and circle what you think is the right answer.

1. I am a broadleaf deciduous tree. My timber is hardwood and it is heavy. I grow from a small acorn. Who am I?

- a) Douglas fir
- b) oak
- c) Scots pine

2. I have wide leaves and I keep them on my branches in winter. My leaves are spiky and people like to use my branches for Christmas decorations. Who am I?

- a) crab apple
- b) holly
- c) silver birch

3. I am a softwood and my leaves fall off in winter. My leaves are shaped like needles. Who am I?

- a) a deciduous conifer - larch
- b) an evergreen conifer – Scots pine
- c) a deciduous broadleaf – oak

Activity 2: Be a tree detective! Comparing conifer and broadleaf trees

You will need:

Woodland Trust tree identification resources

Charcoal and/or pencil.

a) Use the Woodland Trust Nature Detectives tree leaf identification resources to find out the names of the trees in your school grounds. They can help you identify broadleaf trees.

b) If you have any conifer trees on your school grounds, the Forestry Commission's online tree name trail can help you identify them.

c) If you have found one conifer tree and one broadleaf tree in your school grounds, sketch them using charcoal or pencil. Draw the shape of the trees, their leaves/needles and if they have seeds/cones and/or flowers. You could also do a bark rubbing to compare their bark.

d) Fill in the table below to compare Broadleaf and Conifer trees.

e) If you have not got a broadleaf tree and a conifer tree in your school grounds, use Reference Sheet 1 which will show you what a broadleaf and conifer tree look like.

	Broadleaf	Conifer
Tree species name		
Shape: Describe how the whole tree looks		
Leaves, needles or scales: Describe or draw the leaves		
Seeds/cones: Describe what they look like and how they might be dispersed		
Growth: Is it a fast -growing or slow-growing tree?		
Wood: Is it hardwood or softwood. What is the wood from this tree used for?		



leaf ID



Alder



Beech



Oak



Sycamore



Birch



Holly



Elder



Ash



Horse Chestnut



Field Maple



Hawthorn



Hazel



Rowan



Found any other leaves? Do you know which trees they're from?

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Be a real Nature Detective

Identify trees by looking at their leaves

Bottom piece

Leaf iDial



Cut around the dotted lines, then push a split pin through the centre to attach the top piece to the bottom piece.

Use this iDial throughout spring, summer and autumn.

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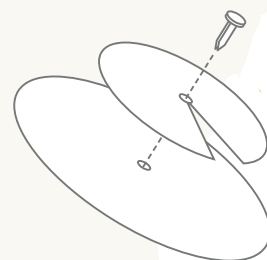
Be a real Nature Detective
Identify trees by looking at
their leaves

Leaf iDial

Top piece

Top tips for top spotters!

Look at how leaves change
through spring, summer
and autumn.



Fab facts!

The ash tree was known as the
'Tree of Life' in Norse mythology,
and it was very important.

Holly is an evergreen, which means
its leaves stay green all year round.

Cut around the dotted lines,
then push a split pin through
the centre to attach the top
piece to the bottom piece.

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Reference sheet 1
Scots pine:



The whole tree



close up of its needles



cone



rings of wood

Broadleaf oak tree:



The whole tree



close up of its leaves



acorn



rings of wood