

DUKES 4 TREES

	2023 / February 10 / Walk 12	
--	------------------------------	--



TOP - Evergreen leaves of the Southern magnolia tree and a follicle where seeds live. (JMU Tree inventory)
BOTTOM RIGHT - Japanese cedar needles with male and female cones. (JMU Tree Inventory)

Evergreen or Conifer? Are they the same?

Almost all conifers are evergreen, but not all evergreens are conifers. Let's break it down by looking at the names. Conifer means cone bearing, this is the big difference between the two terms. While most cone-bearing trees are evergreen, not all evergreens bear cones. Two common examples of evergreens that aren't conifers are magnolias and holly trees. These trees are evergreen because they keep their leaves (or needles) all year long, but they do not bear cones, so they are not conifers.



Common Campus Conifers

Eastern white pine

Also called a soft pine, this conifer grows well and relatively fast compared to other species in the region and is an important source of lumber. It's needles are thin and grow in clusters of five. WHITE has 5 letters, which can help you remember this quick ID tip.

Fun Fact: White pines are the largest conifer in the northeast. The Boogerman Pine, a white pine in Great Smoky Mountain National Park was last recorded at 186 feet tall and is the largest recorded tree east of the Rocky Mountains. (www.conifers.org)

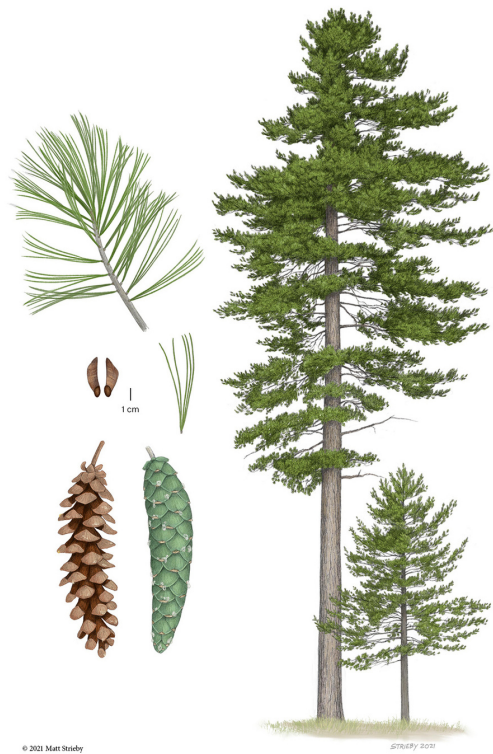
Japanese cedar

Known most frequently in the US as cryptomeria, this conifer is native only to Japan where it is known as sugi and is their national tree. It is rot resistant and its reddish wood is easily worked which has made it important to the Japanese timber industry. They are often planted outside temples in Japan and can live for thousands of years. It is often used in the US as a screening alternative to the Leyland cypress because of its disease tolerance.

Fun Fact: While some know this conifer as Japanese cedar, it is not a true cedar. It is in the cypress family and the only species in the Cryptomeria genus.



Top - Tiny male cones below the bigger round female cones on the Cryptomeria
Bottom - Red-orange shredding bark of Cryptomeria. (JMU Tree Inventory)



Eastern white pine illustration (Matt Strieby)

Norway spruce

This conifer prefers a cooler climate and has a shallow root system. It is native to northern and central Europe, but has been introduced widely to the US. It is the fastest growing spruce and can grow 13-24" in a year. As this conifer matures its branchlets hang down from the main branches. Its cones are the longest of the spruces.

Fun Fact:

In Britain, this conifer is often used as a Christmas tree, despite its poor suitability - it dries out quickly and sheds its needles.

