



Common Trees of the Palouse

Ponderosa pine

Pinus ponderosa

AKA yellow pine

Form: Mid-sized conifer, up to 150 feet tall. Symmetrical trunk.

Bark: Brownish-black on vigorous young trees, turning to a orange or cinnamon color as diameter growth slows. Always scaly with deep furrows on mature trees.

Leaves: Needles in bunches of three. Flexible, yellowish-green, 5-8 inches long.

Cones: Ovate, 3-6 in. long. Cone scales have prickly tip.

Habitat: Dry savannas to moist forests. This is almost always the vanguard tree in the prairie/forest interface.

Douglas-fir

Pseudotsuga menziesii

AKA red fir

Form: Mid-sized conifer up to 180 ft. tall. Compact, pyramidal crown with irregular branching habit. Branches upward spreading to drooping.

Bark: Rough, very thick, reddish-brown, separated by irregular deep furrows.

Leaves: Linear, flattened, blue-green needles. 1 inch long, spirally arranged on twigs.

Cones: Pendent, reddish-brown, oblong-cylindrical, 2-4 in. long, with three lobed bracts protruding from scales.

Habitat: Dry to moist forests.

Grand fir

Abies grandis

AKA white fir

Form: Large conifer, up to 260 ft. tall. Primary branches distinctly opposite.

Bark: Smooth and grayish with resin blisters when young. Aging to ashy brown with thick, deep furrows.

Leaves: Flat needles, about 1 inch long. End of needle rounded and notched. Dark green with two white bands underneath. Distinctly two ranked, forming two flat rows along branch.

Cones: Upright, 2-4 inches long. Disintegrates on tree.

Habitat: Moist forests.

Western larch

Larix occidentalis

AKA tamarack

Form: Large conifer, up to 200 ft. tall. Short open crown. Butt of trunk often swollen.

Bark: Initially thin and scaly, becoming very thick and deeply furrowed into large plates. Flaking into cinnamon-red scales.

Leaves: Deciduous, 15-30 needles borne on short spur. Pale green, becoming pale yellow and falling in late fall.

Cones: Oblong, 1-2 in. long. Thin, borne upright.

Habitat: Dry forests.



Englemann spruce *Picea engelmannii*

Form: Large conifer, up to 180 ft. tall. Crown spirelike, branches extending to the ground.

Bark: Thin, brownish-red, scaly.

Leaves: Short, rigid needles. 1-2 in. long, blue-green, pointed. 4-angled in cross-section. Born singly on a peg which remains on the tree after the needle is shed.

Cones: Oblong, 1-2 in. long. Light tan-brown, scales paper thin. Cones droop from branches.

Habitat: Dry to moist forests.

Western white pine *Pinus monticola*

Form: Large conifer, up to 230 ft. tall. Symmetrical crown with slender, drooping branches.

Bark; Very thin when young, grey and smooth, with resin blisters. Becoming finely checked into small, dark grey squares.

Leaves: Needles in bunches of five. 2-4 inches long, blue-green. Slender and flexible, tip blunt.

Cones: Narrow and curved, 5-15 inches long. Thin, unarmed scales.

Habitat: Moderate to moist sites.

Western hemlock *Tsuga heterophylla*

Form: Large conifer, up to 170 ft. tall. Narrow pyramidal crown with drooping top branch.

Bark: Scaly and russet-brown. Becoming dark with widely separated furrows with age.

Leaves: Short dark green needles, half an inch or less. Attached on a short stem parallel to the branch with needles perpendicular to the branch. Grooved above.

Cones: Less than 1 inch long, light brown, thin scales.

Habitat: Moist sites

Western redcedar *Thuja plicata*

Form: Large, tapering conifer, up to 180 ft. tall. Buttressed, fluted, trunk, with drooping branches.

Bark: Thin, cinammon-red, grayish brown on older trees. Very fibrous, easily separates into long strips.

Leaves: Scalelike, in opposite pairs. Small sub-branches form flat sprays.

Cones: About 1/3 inch long and pointing back towards the tree.. Thin, spine-tipped scales.

Habitat: Moist sites and bottomlands.

Source:

Patterson, P. A., Neiman, K. E., & Tonn, J. R. 1985. Field Guide to Forest Plants of Northern Idaho. USDA, USFS, IMRS, Ogden, Ut. General Technical Report INT-180.