

TREE

broad leaves

needles

ASPEN
COTTONWOOD
WILLOW
POPLAR
BIRCH, ALDER

CONIFER

single needles

needles in bunches

SPRUCE/FIR/DOUGLAS FIR

PINES

sharp, square needles
needle on peg

flat, friendly needles
needle not on peg

needles in
groups of 2-3

needles in
groups of 4-5

SPRUCE

FIR/DOUGLAS FIR

YELLOW PINES

WHITE PINES

very sharp needles
blue color
lower elev./riparian

less sharp needles
green color
higher elev.

higher elev.
cones at top
cones fall apart

lower elev.
cones throughout tree
bracts in cones,
(mice tails)

2 short needles/bundle
straight trunk
small cones

2-3 longer needles/bundle
broad branching trunk
large cones

5 needles/bundle
flexible limbs
large cone w/o spines

5 needles/bundle
rigid limbs
large cone w/ spine

CO BLUE SPRUCE
(*Picea pungens*)

ENGELMANN SPRUCE
(*Picea engelmannii*)

SUBALPINE
FIR
(*Abies lasiocarpa*)

DOUGLAS
FIR
(*Pseudotsuga
menziesii*)

LOGPOLE PINE
(*Pinus contorta*)

PONDEROSA PINE
(*Pinus ponderosa*)

LIMBER PINE
(*Pinus flexilis*)

BRISTLEcone
PINE
(*Pinus aristata*)

A KEY TO CONIFERS OF THE COLORADO FRONT RANGE

Derek Sweeney
Feb 2010

Winter Ecology
University of Colorado - Mountain Research Station