Dichotomous Key for Trees at Mountain Crest

Tree Characteristics **Notes**

 1. Does the tree produce cones?

Yes, conifers (softwoods)…………………………….…….. go to 2.

No, deciduous (hardwoods)………………………….…….. go to 4.

***Conifers:***

2. How many needles per bundle?

 one or needles not apparent……………………….………. go to 3.

 two or more………………………………………….……….. **Pines**

This spruce is common in landscaping: bluish hue to needles = blue spruce

3. What is the shape of the needle?

 scale-like, don’t look like needles……………….…………. **Junipers**

 square (four-sided)……………………………….…………. **Spruces**

***Deciduous Trees:***

4. How are the leaves and twigs arranged on the branches?

 opposite arrangement…………………………………….… go to 5

 alternate arrangement…………………..……….…………. go to 6.

***Opposite Arrangement of Leaves and Branches***

5. How many leaflets are there for each leaf?

 compound leaf along a stem with 5 or more leaflets……. **Ashes**

 simple leaf with three to five fan-like lobes…………......... **Maples**

***Alternate Arrangement of Leaves and Branches***

Tree Characteristics

6. How man leaflets are there for each leaf?

 more than one = compound leaf (twice compound........... Honey locust

 only one = simple leaf………………………………….....… go to 7.

Simple, Alternate Arrangement

7. How is the leaf shaped?

 large, heart-shaped leaf with uneven base………….…... **Basswood**

 not heart-shaped……………………………………….…… go to 8.

8. How is the stalk at the base of the leaf?

 flattened, hard to roll in your hand………………………… **Poplars**

 round, easy to roll in your hand……………………… …… **Apple or Crabapple**