Using a key to identify a tree

This key will unlock the names of some native conifer trees in the Columbia Basin.

First, find a conifer (a cone-bearing tree) and decide if its leaves are needles or scales. Then, by examining your tree, decide which arrows to follow to name that tree!

Tree has 'scales'

cones look like eggs → Western red cedar

cones look like berries → Rocky Mountain juniper

Tree has needles

needles not in bundles

needles are SHARP, spiky and square → Engelmann spruce

needles are FLAT and friendly

needles are about the same length → Douglas fir

needles are very different lengths → Western hemlock

My needles are not in bundles. See how each come out of the branch individually?

needles are in bundles

bundles of 2, 3 or 5 needles

bundles of 2 → Lodgepole pine

bundles of 3 → Ponderosa pine

bundles of 5 → White pine

bundles of 15+ needles → Western larch
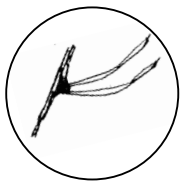
I am a bundle. See how I come out of the stem in a group?

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