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Next

How to identify a maple tree without leaves

Photos of Dormant Winter Tree Twig Markers Dormant Tree Twigs. USFS Illustration Photos of Dormant Winter Tree Markers Identifying a dormant tree is not nearly as complicated as it might seem at first glance. Dormant tree identification will demand some dedication to apply the necessary practice to improve the skill of identifying trees without leaves. I have compiled this gallery to augment your study of trees in winter to better identify tree species. Use this gallery and follow my instructions in A Beginning Guide to Winter Tree Identification. Using your powers of observation, you will find a pleasurable and beneficial way to enhance your skills as a naturalist, - even in the dead of winter. Learning to identify a tree without leaves can immediately make your growing season trees easier to name. Vegetative structures on a tree are all important in its identification. The tree twig can tell you a lot about the kind of tree your are looking at. One bit of caution when using the above markers. You need to observe an average-looking and maturing tree and stay away from root sprouts, seedlings, suckers and juvenile growth. Rapidly growing young growth can (but not always) have atypical markers that will confuse the beginning identifier. Trees that have Opposite or Alternate Twigs, Limb and Leaf Arrangement Leaf and Twig Arrangements. USFS Illustration Opposite or Alternate Twigs: Most tree twig keys start with the arrangement of leaf, limb and buds. It is the primary first separation of the most common tree species. You can eliminate major blocks of trees just by observing its leaf and twig arrangement. Alternate leaf attachments have one unique leaf at each leaf node and typically alternate direction along the stem. Opposite leaf attachments pair leaves at each node. Whorled leaf attachment is where three or more leaves attach at each point or node on the stem. The opposites are maple, ash, dogwood, paulownia buckeye and boxelder (which is really a maple). The alternates are oak, hickory, yellow poplar, birch, beech, elm, cherry, sweetgum and sycamore. Ash twig and fruit. Steve Nix Ash is a deciduous tree in North America, the twigs are opposite and mostly pinnately-compound. The seeds, known as keys are a type of fruit known as a samara. Shield-shaped leaf scar. Tall, pointed bud. No stipules. Pitchfork-like limb tips. Long and narrow clustered winged seed. Continuous bundle scars inside leaf scar looks like "smiley face". Dormant Pitchfork-like Ash Limb Tips Ash Twigs. Steve Nix Ash is a deciduous tree in North America, the twigs are opposite and mostly pinnately-compound. The seeds, known as keys are a type of fruit known as a samara. Shield-shaped leaf scar. Tall, pointed bud. No stipules. Pitchfork-like limb tips. Long and narrow clustered winged seed. Continuous bundle scars inside leaf scar looks like "smiley face". Ash twig. VT Dendrology Ash is a deciduous tree in North America, the twigs are opposite and mostly pinnately-compound. The seeds, known as keys are a type of fruit known as a samara. Shield-shaped leaf scar. Tall, pointed bud. No stipules. Pitchfork-like limb tips. Long and narrow clustered winged seed. Continuous bundle scars inside leaf scar looks like "smiley face". Identify the Ashes American beech has grey, smooth bark and often called the "initial tree". Old Growth Beech. AVTG E-+Getty images The leaves are finely toothed. Flowers are small catkins produced in spring. The fruit is a small, sharply 3-angled nut in pairs and in soft-spined husks. Often confused with birch, hophornbeam and ironwood.Has long narrow scaled buds (vs. short scaled buds on birch).Has grey, smooth bark and often called the "initial tree".Has no catkins.Has spiny-husked nuts.Often root suckers surround old trees."Human-like" looking roots on older trees. A Beech Twig with a Long, Distinctive Bud Beech twig. VT Dendrology The leaves are finely toothed. Flowers are small catkins produced in spring. The fruit is a small, sharply 3-angled nut in pairs and in soft-spined husks. Often confused with birch, hophornbeam and ironwood. Has long narrow scaled buds (vs. short scaled buds on birch). Has grey, smooth bark and often called the "initial tree". Has no catkins. Has spiny-husked nuts. Often root suckers surround old trees. "Human-like" looking roots on older trees. Identify the Beeches Most Birch Tree have Exfoliating Bark River Birch Bark. Steve Nix The simple leaves are finely toothed. The fruit is a small samara. Birch differs from alder (Alnus) with a female catkin is not woody and will not fall apart. Often confused with beech, hophornbeam, alder and ironwood. Has short, scaled buds (vs. # long, scaled buds on beech). Male and female parts on same tree (male long catkins, female short cones). Has no catkins. Yellow birch has wintergreen tasting twig. River birch has salmon colored exfoliating bark. Paper (canoe) birch has creamy white thin bark separating into papery strips. River Birch Twig and Buds River birch twig. Steve Nix The simple leaves are finely toothed. The fruit is a small samara. Birch differs from alder (Alnus) with a female catkin is not woody and will not fall apart. Often confused with beech, hophornbeam, alder and ironwood. Has short, scaled buds (vs. # long, scaled buds on beech). Male and female parts on same tree (male long catkins, female short cones). Has no catkins. Yellow birch has wintergreen tasting twig. River birch has salmon colored exfoliating bark. Paper (canoe) birch has creamy white thin bark separating into papery strips. Identify the Birches Paper Birch Twig and Fruit. altrendo nature Altrendo/Getty images The simple leaves are finely toothed. The fruit is a small samara. Birch differs from alder (Alnus) with a female catkin is not woody and will not fall apart. Often confused with beech, hophornbeam, alder and ironwood. Has short, scaled buds (vs. # long, scaled buds on beech). Male and female parts on same tree (male long catkins, female short cones). Has no catkins. Yellow birch has wintergreen tasting twig. River birch has salmon colored exfoliating bark. Paper (canoe) birch has creamy white thin bark separating into papery strips. Identify the Birches Black cherry bark. Steve Nix The leaves are simple with a serrated margin. The black fruit are somewhat astringent and bitter to eat. Has narrow corky and light, horizontal lenticels on young bark. Bark breaks into dark plates and raised edges on older wood described as "burnt cornflakes". Twig has "bitter almond" taste. Bark is dark grey but both smooth and scaly with reddish-brown inner bark. Cherry twig. VT Dendrology Young cherry has narrow corky and light, horizontal lenticels on young bark. Has narrow corky and light, horizontal lenticels on young bark. Bark breaks into dark plates and raised edges on older wood described as "burnt cornflakes". Twig has "bitter almond" taste. Bark is dark grey but both smooth and scaly with reddish-brown inner bark. Identify the Cherry Dogwood Winter Buds. Steve Nix image These flowering dogwood buds will burst into white flowers in Spring. Clove-shaped terminal flower bud."Square plated" bark.Leaf scar encircles twig.Leaf buds inconspicuous.Remnant "raisin" seed.Stipule scars are absent. Flowering Dogwood Bark Flowering Dogwood Bark. Steve Nix Flowering dogwood trunks are noted for "Square plated" bark. Clove-shaped terminal flower bud."Square plated" bark.Leaf scar encircles twig.Leaf buds inconspicuous.Remnant "raisin" seed.Stipule scars are absent. Identify Flowering Dogwood Flowering dogwood twig. Steve Nix Slender twig, green or purple early turning gray later. The terminal flower buds are clove-shaped and vegetative buds resemble a dull cat claw. Clove-shaped terminal flower bud. "Square plated" bark. Leaf scar encircles twig. Leaf buds inconspicuous. Remnant "raisin" seed. Stipule scars are absent. Identify Flowering Dogwood Elm Bark with Summer Leaves Elm Bark with Summer Leaves. Steve Nix Here is rock elm with a yellow-tinted, plated bark. Has brown irregular bark that is tinged with red. Has zig-zag twigs. Bark acts like cork when pressed with finger nail (bounces back). Bundle scars in three clusters.Terminal bud is absent. Identify the Elms American Elm Trunk. Steve McCallister/the image bank/Getty images Here is American elm with irregular bark with a slight yellow tint. Has brown irregular bark that is tinged with red.Has zig-zag twigs.Bark acts like cork when pressed with finger nail (bounces back).Bundle scars in three clusters.Terminal bud is absent. Identify the Elms Hackberry Bark Hackberry Bark. Steve Nix Hackberry bark is smooth and gray-brown when young, soon developing corky, individual "warts". This bark structure is a very good identification marker. Hackberry Bark Pith is often chambered at the nodes.. Corky and warty bark, later turning to corky ridges. Round dried drupes (seed) may be found under tree. Identify Hackberry Shagbark Hickory. Steve Nix Hickories are deciduous trees with pinnately compound leaves and large with hickory nuts. Remnants of these leaves and nuts will be found in dormancy. 5-sided pith. Variable bark not helpful except for loose, flaky shagbark hickory. Nuts and husks under tree. Stout twigs with large terminal bud. Tan, 5-angled pith. Large heart-shaped to 3-lobed leaf scar. Pecan Bark. Steve Nix Pecan is a member of the hickory family. It produces a very popular nut produced in commercial orchards. 5-sided pith. Variable bark not helpful except for loose, flaky shagbark hickory. Nuts and husks under tree. Stout twigs with large terminal bud. Tan, 5-angled pith. Large heart-shaped to 3-lobed leaf scar. Identify the Hickories Magnolia Bark. Steve Nix Magnolia bark is typically brown to gray, thin, smooth/lenticellate when young. Close plates or scales appear as it ages. Stout twig with white to rusty matted hairs on leaf bottom. Leaf is Alternate, simple, evergreen, oval and relatively large. Silky white to rusty red terminal bud. Maple twig. VT Dendrology Maples are distinguished by opposite leaf and twig arrangement. The distinctive fruit are called samaras or "maple keys". Paired winged key seeds. Red buds and new red stems on red maple. Bark is generally gray but variable in form. Terminal bud is is egg-shaped and slightly larger than lateral buds. Stipule scars absent. Silver Maple Bark. Steve Nix Silver maple bark is light gray and smooth when young, but breaks up into long thin strips, loose at ends when older. Paired winged key seeds. Red buds and new red stems on red maple. Bark is generally gray but variable in form. Terminal bud is is egg-shaped and slightly larger than lateral buds. Stipule scars absent. Identify the Maples Red Maple Bark. Steve Nix On young red maple trees you see smooth and light gray. With age bark becomes darker and breaks up into long, fine scaly plates. Paired winged key seeds. Red buds and new red stems on red maple. Bark is generally gray but variable in form. Terminal bud is is egg-shaped and slightly larger than lateral buds. Stipule scars absent. Identify the Maples Water Oak Bark Water Oak Bark. Steve Nix Many oaks including water oak have variable bark forms and sometimes not helpful for identification alone. 5-sided pith. Variable bark not very helpful. Clustered buds at tip of twig. Persistent leaves on live and water oak. Slightly raised, semi-circular leaf scars. Numerous bundle scars. Acorns persistent on twigs or under the tree. Numerous bundle scars. Identify the Oaks Persistent oak twig. Steve Nix Certain oaks, including water oak and live oak, are persistent to semi-evergreen. 5-sided pith. Variable bark not very helpful. Clustered buds at tip of twig. Persistent leaves on live and water oak. Slightly raised, semi-circular leaf scars. Numerous bundle scars. Acorns persistent on twigs or under the tree. Numerous bundle scars. Identify the Oaks Persimmon Bark Persimmon Bark. Steve Nix Persimmon bark is deeply furrowed into small square scaly plates. Small square scaly plated bark. Fleshy rounded fruit may be found under the tree. Twigs are slightly zig-zag and often hairy. Identify Persimmon Red Cedar Bark. Steve Nix Redbud Bark Redbud Bark. Steve Nix Smooth dark gray/brown bark furrowing with age. Flat and long narrow pods under tree. Twigs are brown, slender and angled. Identify Redbud Redbud Flowers and Remnant Fruit Redbud Flowers and Remnant Fruit. Steve Nix Smooth dark gray/brown bark furrowing with age. Flat and long narrow pods under tree. Twigs are brown, slender and angled. Identify Redbud Sweetgum Bark Sweetgum Bark. Steve Nix Sweetgum bark is gray-brown with irregular furrows and rough rounded ridges. Note the water sprout on the bole in the photo. Corky outgrowth on twig bark. Spiny "gumballs" on long stalk. Green/orange-brown shiny bud scales. Terminal bud sticky. Spikey fruit called a Gumball. Sweetgum balls. Steve Nix Sweetgum leaves are palmately lobed with a long and broad petiole or stem. The compound fruit, commonly called a "gumball" or "birball", is a spikey ball. Corky outgrowth on twig bark. Spiny "gumballs" on long stalk. Green/orange-brown shiny bud scales. Terminal bud sticky. Identify Sweetgum Sycamore fruit balls. Zig-zag stout twigs. Mottled "camouflage" exfoliating (peeling) bark (green, white, tan). Spherical multiple achenes with long stalks (fruit balls). Numerous raised bundle scars.leaf scar nearly surrounds the bud. Buds are large and cone-shaped. Identify Sycamore Old Sycamore Bark. Steve Nix Zig-zag stout twigs.Mottled "camouflage" exfoliating (peeling) bark (green, white, tan).Spherical multiple achenes with long stalks (fruit balls).Numerous raised bundle scars.leaf scar nearly surrounds the bud.Buds are large and cone-shaped. Identify Sycamore Opposite and Alternate Twigs Sycamore and ash - alternate and opposite. Steve Nix Zig-zag stout twigs.Mottled "camouflage" exfoliating (peeling) bark (green, white, tan).Spherical multiple achenes with long stalks (fruit balls).Numerous raised bundle scars.leaf scar nearly surrounds the bud.Buds are large and cone-shaped. Yellow Poplar Bark Yellow Poplar Bark. Steve Nix Yellow poplar bark is an easy identification marker. Look at the gray-green bark with unique "inverted V" on limb to trunk connections. "Duck bill" or "mitten" looking buds. Large stipule scars encircling the twig. Cone-like aggregate of samaras. Buds "fuzzy". Unique "inverted V" on limb to trunk connection. Gray-green bark with light furrows. Pith often divided by partitions of stone cells. Identify Yellow Poplar Yellow poplar twig. Steve Nix Yellow poplar has a very interesting twig. Look at the "duck bill" or "mitten" shaped buds. "Duck bill" or "mitten" looking buds. Large stipule scars encircling the twig. Cone-like aggregate of samaras. Buds "fuzzy". Unique "inverted V" on limb to trunk connection. Gray-green bark with light furrows. Pith often divided by partitions of stone cells. Identify Yellow Poplar

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