

Trees of the Kootenai National Forest

The Kootenai National Forest is home to many different tree species - explore fun facts about them with us!



Douglas Fir

THE DOUGLAS-FIR IS A TREE ADMIRER IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY FOR ITS STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY AND BEAUTIFUL FINISH. THEY ARE OFTEN USED TO MAKE HOMES, COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND EVEN BRIDGES. IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE COMMON TREES DECORATED AS CHRISTMAS TREES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.



Englemann Spruce

THE ENGLEMANN SPRUCE IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE IN THE MAKING OF INSTRUMENTS, SUCH AS GUITARS, HARPS AND VIOLINS DUE TO ITS LIGHT WEIGHT WOOD AND RESONANT QUALITIES. ALTHOUGH VALUABLE, IT IS NOT OFTEN HARVESTED DUE TO ITS HIGH ALTITUDE LOCATION. BEARS, ELK AND SHEEP DELIGHT IN HIDING IN ITS COVER.



Lodgepole Pine

THE LODGEPOLE PINE IS AN IMPORTANT TREE TO THE FOREST, AS THEY ARE ONE OF THE FIRST TO EMERGE AFTER A FIRE. THIS IS BECAUSE THE SEEDS REQUIRE HEAT AND/OR FIRE IN ORDER TO RELEASE AND SPREAD. ADDITIONALLY, THIS PINE IS A STAPLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN MANY CULTURES, WITH THEIR IMPRESSIVELY STRAIGHT TRUNKS BEING USED AS THE MAIN STRUCTURE FOR LODGES AND HOMES.



Mountain Hemlock

THE MOUNTAIN HEMLOCK IS A DOMINANT TREE TYPE FOUND AT HIGH ALTITUDES. DUE TO THEIR LOCATION, THEY ARE RARELY USED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES, BUT ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR BEAUTY. THE INTERIOR OF THEIR BARK, AS WELL AS THE NEEDLES ARE EDIBLE AND CAN BE USED TO MAKE A TEA RICH IN VITAMIN C.



Pacific Yew

ONCE A SOURCE OF PRECIOUS MEDICINE, THE PACIFIC YEW IS SCARCELY FOUND, BUT IS VERY IDENTIFIABLE DUE TO ITS RED BERRIES. THESE BERRIES, ALTHOUGH ATTRACTIVE, ARE HIGHLY POISONOUS TO HUMANS IF EATEN. IN THE 1960S IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT TAXOL CAN BE EXTRACTED FROM THE TREE'S BARK TO PREVENT BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCERS.



Ponderosa Pine

PONDEROSA PINES ARE VERY COMMON IN THE AMERICAN NORTHWEST, THRIVING IN ENVIRONMENTS WITH SHORT, DRY SUMMERS AND LONG, COLD WINTERS. THEY GREATLY BENEFIT FROM CONTROLLED FIRES WHICH STRUCTURE THEIR FORESTS. IT IS KNOWN THAT THEIR BARK CARRIES THE SCENT OF VANILLA OR BUTTERSCOTCH.



Quaking Aspen

THE QUAKING ASPEN IS KNOWN FOR ITS BEAUTIFUL FALL COLORS, WHICH TURN YELLOW AND ORANGE AMONG THE EVERGREENS. THE TREE IS USED FOR MANY PULP PRODUCTS SUCH AS PAPER FOR BOOKS, PRINTING AND NEWSPAPER. IN INDIGENOUS CULTURE, ITS CHEWED ROOTS CAN EVEN BE USED TO STOP BLEEDING



Western Larch

ALSO KNOWN AS A **TAMARACK**, THE WESTERN LARCH IS ONE OF THE ONLY CONIFEROUS TREES TO LOSE ITS NEEDLES EACH YEAR. THIS QUALITY MAKES IT A DECIDUOUS CONIFER. THE WORD "TAMARACK" TRANSLATES TO "*WOOD USED FOR SNOWSHOES*" WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT INDIGENOUS CULTURES USE THE TREE FOR.



Western Redcedar

THE WESTERN REDCEDAR RESIDES ALONG STREAMS AND WET HILLSIDES, WITH EXTREMELY VERSATILE USE. ITS DEBRIS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO HEALTHY STREAM CULTURE AND THE WOOD IS OFTEN USED FOR ROOFING AND OUTDOOR CONSTRUCTION DUE TO ITS ROT RESISTANT NATURE. INDIGENOUS CULTURES WEAVE FABRIC FROM ITS BARK INTO BASKETS AND CLOTHING, AS WELL AS CREATE CANOES FROM IT.



Sources

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