



Native Plant ID Key

This dichotomous key will help you identify some of the native plants you will see here at SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve. Follow the key as you examine closely a plant in the forest. This key does not include every plant you may see, but it is a good place to start.

- 1a. The plant has needles or needle-like sprays (is a tree).....go to 2
- 1b. The plant has leaves or fronds.....go to 5
- 2a. Tree has flat sprays that are scaly, and the bark is reddish and stringy.....**Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*)**
- 2b. Tree has true needles..... go to 3
- 3a. The needles are arranged in packets and/ or are stiff and sharp to touch.....go to 14
- 3b. The needles are soft to touch and arranged individually.....go to 4
- 4a. The needles are flat on either side of branch.....**Western Hemlock (*tsuga heterophylla*)**
- 4b. The needles are wrapped around the branch like a bottle brush.....**Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)**
- 5a. The plant has leaves.....go to 6
- 5b. The plant has fronds.....go to 13
- 6a. The plant is a tree (branching from one trunk)go to 7
- 6b. The plant is a shrub (many stalks and shorter than 6 ft).....go to 10
- 7a. The leaves are elliptical and have a pointed tip..... go to 8
- 7b. They leaves have lobes or are palmate.....go to 9
- 8a. Leaves have smooth edges and the bark is gray with braided pattern....**Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)**
- 8b. Leaves have serrated edges bark is smooth and covered with lichens.....**Red alder (*Alnus rubra*)**
- 9a. Leaves are large with five points, bark is grey-brown and hosts ferns.....**Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)**
- 9b. Leaves are smaller than your hand with 7-9 points, grey/green bark.....**Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)**
- 10a. The shrub has thick, tough, waxy leaves or stalk has spines....go to 11
- 10b. The shrub has soft, delicate leaves.....go to 12
- 11a. Has a spiny stalk and large, tough leaves (greater than 5 inches).....,....**Devils Club (*oplopanax horridum*)**
- 11b. Shurb has thick, waxy leaves (evergreen leaves)..... go to 18
- 12a. Shrub is tree-like with small, smooth edged leaves are wiry branches... **Red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*)**
- 12b. Bush-like shrub with toothed, compound leaves of three..... **Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)**



SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve

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- 13a. The fern is bushy with dark green fronds that come out of center..... **Sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*)**
- 13b. The fern is triangular with airy, green fronds that extend from a stem.....**Bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*)**
- 14a. Needles in packets of 5 with white stripe..... Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*)
- 14b. Needles are arranged individually around branch and are spiny to touch.....Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*)
- 17a. The shrub has