Field Guide to Identifying Trees in the West

**Needles or Broadleaf?**
*(including scales)*

**Coniferous**
- Needles or Scales?
  - Are you in the mountains, desert or northwest coast? (Scales are in junipers, cypresses & redwoods)

**Broadleaf**
- Too many variations to whittle down here, but some key identifiers:
  - Oak trees
    - (have acorns. When bushes, often evergreen. When larger, often have lobed leaves and twisted trunks)
  - Maple trees
    - (Very distinct leaf shape, like the Canadian flag)
  - Cottonwood & aspen trees
    - (heart shaped leaves. Cottonwoods have grey, rough bark. aspens have smooth white bark with “eyes”)
  - Birch trees
    - (White or very light, papery bark that can often peel off in strips)
  - Alder trees
    - (Broadleaf tree with small cones. Bark often looks like birch)

**Mountains**
- Are the trees massive, hundreds of feet tall?
  - If so, it’s a Giant Sequoia you’re in the Sierra. Coastal Redwood if you’re in Northern California
  - Otherwise, it’s probably a juniper.
    - (Look for small cones shaped like blush colored berries)

**Desert**
- Are the cones like small leathery teaballs?
  - If so, it’s likely a cypress.
  - Otherwise, it’s probably a juniper.
    - (Look for small cones shaped like blush colored berries)

**Northwest Coast**
- Does the bark look shredded into horizontal strips?
  - If the scales small great, it’s likely a redcedar; if the tree is massive it’s probably a redwood
  - Otherwise, it’s probably a juniper.
    - (Look for small cones shaped like blush colored berries)