

Congratulations to last month's artist! – Caleb Fisher (age 3)

January 2021

## I Spy Something Green

While most trees have lost their leaves, some are still green. Because these trees are green during the winter and summer, we call them **evergreens**. Most evergreens in Michigan have leaves that look like needles. Needle leaves look different than the leaves we see during the summer but serve the same purpose. The needles capture sunlight and take in carbon dioxide. They then produce food for the tree and oxygen for us to breathe.

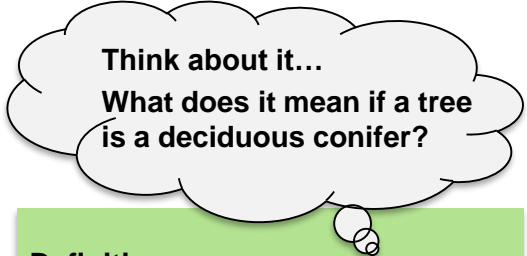
Needles are more adapted to survive the cold winter than the leaves of **deciduous** trees. The thick wax coating on needles helps them to survive snow and ice. Needles also lose less water than other leaves. Needles do not fall off all at once but if you look under the tree you will see needles. As they

get older, they gradually fall off the tree and are replaced.

Can you think of any evergreens in Michigan? You probably thought of a pine tree. Many evergreens are also conifers. Spruce and pine trees are both common evergreens. These are both **conifers**. Conifers carry their seeds inside cones. Cones come in many different shapes and sizes. Next time you see an evergreen tree take a close look to see if it also has cones.

Not all evergreens have cones and needles. In warmer climates, trees with broad leaves can be evergreens. For example, many trees in the rainforest do not have needles or cones but they keep their leaves year round.

You can find examples of tropical evergreens inside the conservatory at Hidden Lake Gardens. Outside, we have many evergreens native to Michigan. We also use evergreens to create gardens that stay beautiful year round. Next time you visit be sure to walk through our conifer collection to appreciate a wide variety of evergreens .



### Definitions:

**Evergreen:** a plant that has leaves during the entire year

**Deciduous:** a plant that loses all of its leaves for part of the year

**Conifer:** a plant that produces cones to carry its seeds

## ► Word Search

Find these Michigan Evergreens in the word search:

- CEDAR**
- FIR**
- HEMLOCK**
- HOLLY**
- PINE**
- SPRUCE**



G W D Z N X P C Z L L I D T M  
 Q E D H R E B B X V G C A E L  
 Z M U W J P W M Z M D E V O K  
 F N D T C E J X P E G S V N F  
 C B E R Y F U U R A U W O G K  
 M W G C I N S N A X P E F Z O  
 V A N H V R X L W J N N Y M M  
 S F O V E X C H E M L O C K M  
 R P L R R M H U C Z B U X L D  
 E D R W I C O U U B Z D E A I  
 Q Z P U E F L S L B F L W J V  
 B M H D C C L L D H L U K S Q  
 F G A U Q E Y M V E O W R G X  
 H R B D E A T T L C U A R M Q  
 Q R F P T U T K E N I P B R W

**FUN FACT!** Michigan's State Tree, the White Pine is a coniferous, evergreen.

## ► Featured Plant: Jack Pine

Jack Pine is a coniferous, evergreen. It keeps its needles all year round and produces cones. The cones are smaller than many of the pine cones you are familiar with. They are only about 2 inches.

Jack Pines grow in the northern parts of Michigan. They grow in areas where other trees often cannot because the soil is sandy

and dry (The Department of Natural Resources).

Jack Pines have a unique adaptation and actually depend on fire to reproduce. The cones are tightly sealed with the seeds inside. Heat from fire allows the cones to open and the seeds to escape (State of Michigan).



Photo by [DNR](#)

Photo by [Aaron Kortenhoven](#)

## ► Featured Animal: Kirtland's Warbler

The Kirtland's warbler is a black and yellow bird that depends on Michigan's Jack pine forests to breed. This warbler builds its nests on the ground. It requires young Jack Pines to build under because these offer more protection than older, taller trees. Because this bird breeds only in Michigan and in a specific **habitat**, it is important to protect its habitat. The Kirtland warbler is

**endangered** so Jack pine forests are carefully managed to ensure the Kirtland's warbler has a home (State of Michigan).

**Habitat:** an environment where an organism lives or breeds

**Endangered:** so few of an animal exist that it is in danger of vanishing forever

## ► Try at Home: Kitchen Scrap Gardening




Did you know you can grow new leaves from vegetable scraps? Cut the base off of romaine lettuce or carrots and place in a shallow dish of water for a week or two. Change the water every other day and see what grows!



# Conifer Scavenger Hunt

## Small Cones




## Soft Needles



## Large Cones



## Sap





### ► Contact Us

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**Submit your coloring page for a chance to be featured in our next newsletter!**

Please email a clear photo or color scan of your finished coloring sheet (including child's name and age) to Samantha Howard at [howar279@msu.edu](mailto:howar279@msu.edu) by January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### ► References

State of Michigan. (2016, May 31). Fire, jack pine and aspen - understanding a historic relationship. Michigan.gov [https://www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29907\\_29954-385756--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29907_29954-385756--,00.html)

The Department of Natural Resources. (2020). *Jack Pine* [https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135\\_79218\\_79615\\_86810---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135_79218_79615_86810---,00.html)