



AMONG THE LEAVES

Written by
The Good and The Beautiful Team



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Deciduous trees and evergreen trees are two of the most common types of trees found around the world.



DECIDUOUS TREES

Deciduous trees are characterized by their ability to shed their leaves in the fall. These trees often have robust trunks with branches that stretch out like fingers, adorned with thick foliage that provides shade and shelter during the hot summer months. When the seasons change and the temperatures begin to drop, the leaves of deciduous trees turn brilliant shades of yellow, orange, and red before eventually falling to the ground, creating a carpet of leaves underfoot. In the winter, deciduous trees are bare, revealing their intricate branching patterns against the stark white of the snow.



EVERGREEN TREES

In contrast, evergreen trees retain their foliage year-round, with thick needles or small, leathery leaves that are resistant to cold temperatures and harsh weather conditions. These trees provide a constant source of greenery even in the depths of winter, and their branches are often used as decoration during the winter holiday season. Evergreen trees can grow to be quite tall, with some reaching heights of over 30 m (100 ft). Their dense foliage provides shelter and nesting grounds for a wide range of animals, from squirrels and birds to deer and bears.

Deciduous and evergreen trees are an essential component of our ecosystem, providing vital oxygen, shelter, and food for a multitude of creatures. Their beauty and majesty have inspired artists, poets, and writers for centuries, and they continue to captivate and awe us with their stunning presence.



FRUIT-BEARING TREES

(APPLE, PEAR,
PEACH, FIG)

Fruit-bearing trees are a fascinating aspect of nature, with their ability to produce delicious, edible fruits that offer a feast for both the eyes and palate. These magnificent trees require a specific set of conditions to thrive, such as the right amount of sunlight, water, and nutrients. They also require consistent care, including pruning and fertilization, to ensure their optimal growth and fruit production.





Some fruit-bearing trees can produce fruit for several years, while others have a limited lifespan of fruit production. This is due to a variety of factors, including the age and health of the tree, as well as the amount of stress it endures. Fruit-bearing trees are a crucial component of our food system, providing a healthy and delicious source of sustenance for people worldwide. Their beautiful blooms and bountiful fruits are a reminder of the abundance and wonder of nature.

MAHOGANY TREES

A decorative orange wavy line that starts near the top of the text box and curves downwards, ending near the bottom of the text box.

Mahogany trees are found in many parts of the world, particularly in the tropical regions of the Americas, Africa, and Asia. They are known for their dense reddish-brown wood, which is highly valued for its durability, beauty, and versatility. These stately trees can grow to be over 20 m (65 ft) tall and have a canopy that spreads out to over 15 m (50 ft) in diameter. Their leaves are large and shiny, with a deep green color that contrasts beautifully with the warm tones of their wood.

The wood of the mahogany tree is dense, hard, and resistant to decay, making it ideal for use in furniture, flooring, and other high-quality products. Its rich, reddish-brown color and fine grain give it a distinctive and luxurious look that is highly sought after by craftspeople and consumers alike. Sadly, mahogany trees are currently facing significant threats from overexploitation and habitat loss, as well as illegal logging and deforestation. Efforts are underway to protect and conserve these magnificent trees and ensure that they continue to thrive and flourish for generations to come.



CHERRY TREES



Cherry trees are an exquisite and beloved tree species known for their vibrant, showy blossoms and delicious fruit. They are native to many parts of the world, including Asia, Europe, and North America, and are highly valued for their ornamental and culinary uses. Cherry trees can grow to be up to 9 m (30 ft) tall, with a broad, spreading canopy that is covered in stunning pink or white blossoms during the spring season. Their leaves are dark green and glossy, with a distinctly pointed shape that adds to their overall charm and appeal.





In addition to their striking appearance, cherry trees are also known for their delicious fruit, which is often used in pies, jams, and other sweet treats. Cherries come in a variety of colors, ranging from deep red to golden yellow, and are highly prized for their juicy, sweet flavor. They are also valued for their cultural significance, with cherry blossom festivals and traditions celebrated in many parts of the world.



FIR TREES

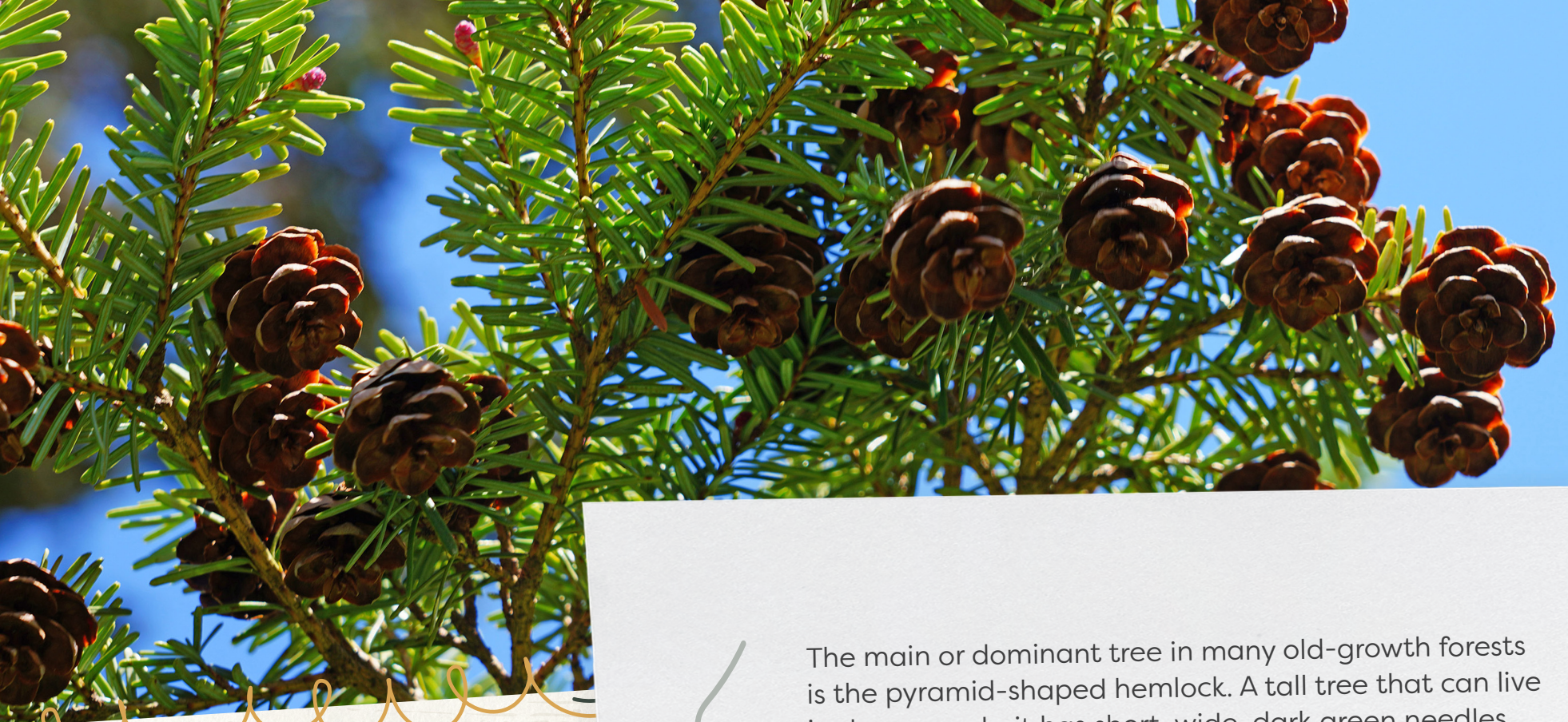


If you have ever had a live Christmas tree in your home, there's a good chance it was a fir. Balsam and Fraser firs, both native to the eastern US, are two of the most popular choices for Christmas decor. You'd need a really big living room to fit a full-grown tree, though: when mature, these two firs can reach 15 to 21 m (50 to 70 ft). Other American varieties of fir found westward from the Rocky Mountains can get even taller. The white fir, noble fir, and Pacific silver fir all tower up to 60 m (200 ft)!





Firs can be distinguished from other evergreen conifers, or cone-bearing trees, by their needles, which are flat and soft (rather than stiff and sharp, like the needles of a spruce). Like other conifers, firs are sticky trees, oozing resin from spots on their trunks. Resin, which is different from sap, helps protect the tree from disease, acting like a scab to keep out insects and fungus. This gooey substance doesn't dissolve in water, which is why you would have to use oil or alcohol to clean it off your skin, clothes, or hair. Not all resin is sticky, however: amber is resin from ancient trees that has fossilized into a beautiful gem!



The main or dominant tree in many old-growth forests is the pyramid-shaped hemlock. A tall tree that can live in deep woods, it has short, wide, dark green needles that grow in lines along thin twigs. Creatures of the woodlands depend on hemlocks for habitat and food. Tiny seed-bearing cones grow from the tips of branches. In turn, chipmunks, voles, and other rodents feed on the hemlock seeds once they are released. Hemlock needles and new growth provide fodder for large animals such as moose and deer and sometimes smaller mammals such as porcupines. Even certain fish, including trout, need hemlock trees for survival: the strong, dense branches provide plenty of shade to keep the waters below nice and cool for these fish.



PINE TREES



Many evergreen trees have needles. Many produce cones. But only one kind of tree has needles that grow in clusters: the pine. Pine needles are predictable with two, three, or five needles per bundle. The number of needles that appear in each cluster is a clue to the specific species. White pine trees have five needles (remember this by noting that the word *white* has five letters), yellow pines have three needles, and red pines have two needles. Within those pine types are more than 120 different species, ranging from the popular eastern white pine that was often made into ship masts to the stately longleaf pine that stands tall throughout the southern US.

We know that all plants need water, oxygen, sunlight, and nutrients to grow, but there is one more unique need that many pines have for regeneration. That need is fire. With strong pine cones glued shut by their own resin, some pine species need fire to break through the cones so that the seeds can escape. The scraggly jack pine is one such tree. Jack pine cones can stay shut for years until a fire comes through.

Pine is a softwood perfect for building and for making pulp that is turned into paper. There's a good chance you are holding pine in your hand as you read this book.



CYPRESS TREES



Where there are cypress trees, there is often water, and where there are cypress trees growing in water, the water becomes clean. While cypress trees can grow in dry soil, many of them find their homes in wetlands, where they absorb pollutants from the environment.

Cypress needles are quite different from the needles of other cone-bearing trees. The needles appear flat, feel soft, and even look lacy or feathery. It's their clean, woody odor that makes smelling the needles refreshing—except for the Arizona cypress. The oil in this tree's needles smells like a skunk. Cypress bark grows in long ridges that come off in stringy strips on most species. Oils in the tree make the wood resistant to rotting, making it good for building boats and decks.





Many cypress trees are quite old, living to 500 or 600 years. While some are evergreen, keeping their needles year-round, others actually lose their needles in the fall. The bald cypress gets its name from this deciduous leaf-dropping habit.



BLUEBERRY ASH TREES



Despite what its name suggests, the blueberry ash tree is not closely related to the ash tree common to the Northern Hemisphere. A member of a family of tropical trees and shrubs, the blueberry ash is native to eastern Australia.

With its pretty blossoms and fruit, the blueberry ash is a favorite decorative tree and can be found in gardens and along city streets. Because its fringed, bell-shaped flowers in white or pink resemble tiny skirts, another common name for this tree is fairy petticoat. Its vibrant blue fruit is not truly a berry, but a drupe like an olive or cherry. The fruit can remain on the plant throughout the year, with the charming result that “berries” and blooms appear on the plant at the same time. The blooms smell like licorice.



While many types of birds enjoy the fruit of the blueberry ash, the male regent bowerbird does something even more interesting with the colorful fruit: he uses it when courting a mate! To attract females, male regent bowerbirds build a bower, an elaborate structure of sticks decorated with colorful items including shells, fruit, and even pieces of plastic. These birds are especially drawn to the color blue, and one might say the blueberry ash fruit fits the bill perfectly.





AMONG ^{THE} LEAVES

Among the Leaves takes you on a trip outdoors and around the world to discover deciduous and evergreen trees and their essential roles in our ecosystem. Pairing fascinating, detailed descriptions with vibrant images, this book teaches you how these majestic trees have been a valuable resource to our biosphere for centuries. Grab a seat—or the branch of a willow—and immerse yourself in the beauty of trees.



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