



# Evergreen identification key for Gilpin County

How to use this key: Read both choices in a pair, decide which one sounds more like the tree you are trying to identify, and then follow the dotted line to the next pair indicated by that number. (for example, if you are looking at pair #1, and you notice your needles are in bundles, proceed to pair #2, where your choices will depend on the number of needles that are in that bundle).

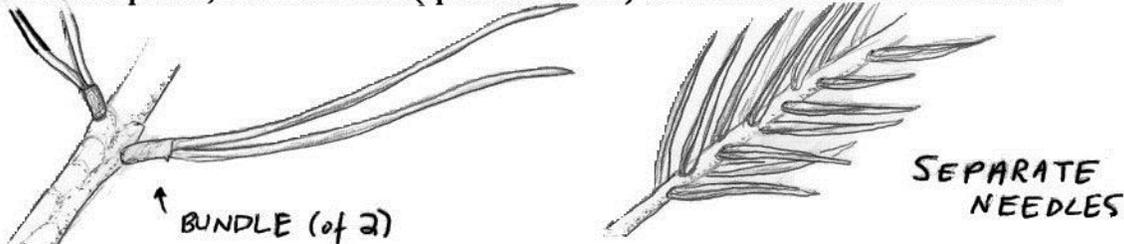
## Shrub

Low growing shrub (1-2' high, and 2-5' wide) with scale-like leaves, fruit a berry  
Common or ground juniper – *Juniperus communis* 5,000 to 9,500'

-or-

## Trees

- 1. Needles in bundles of 2 or more..... 2
- 1. Needles separate, not in bundles (spruces and firs) ..... 5



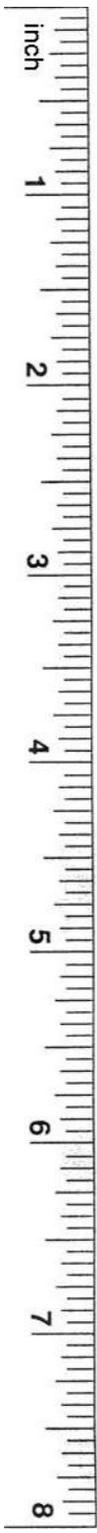
- 2. Needles in bundles of 5..... 3
- 2. Needles in bundles of 2 or 3..... 4

3. Needles usually more than 1.5" long, straight or slightly curved, not sticky to the touch. Cone scales lacking prickles. Crown broad, symmetrical, and often flat-topped. Foothills to subalpine, 5,000 to 11,000'  
**Limber pine, *Pinus flexilis***

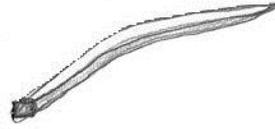
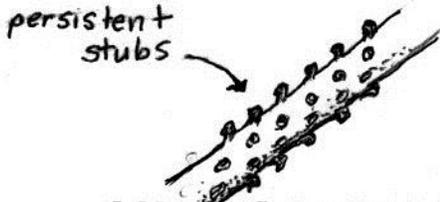
3. Needles usually less than 1.5" long, curved, with white-gray resin spots, sticky to the touch, cone scales with prickles sticking out, montane to subalpine, 7,000 to 13,000'  
**Bristlecone pine, *Pinus aristata***

4. Needles 3 to 8 inches long (longest needles in county), cones 3-6" long, foothills to montane, can grow over 100' high. Bark often reddish. 5,000 to 9,000' Open, dry, sunny areas.  
**Ponderosa pine, *Pinus ponderosa***

4. Needles less than 3" long with a yellow-green color, cones less than 2.5" long. Cone scales bristle-tipped, cones persistent; tree tall, slender, usually over 50' tall at maturity, above 8,000'. Most common tree in Gilpin County.  
**Lodgepole pine, *Pinus contorta***



5. Needles 4-sided (roll between fingers to determine); small branches have nubs of persistent leaf bases ..... 6



5. Needles flattened or 2-sided, small branches smooth ..... 7



6. Needles rigid, sharp to the touch, almost spine-tipped; cones over 2.5" long; needles often with obvious bluish color, bark gray and scaly, often grows from 65'-115' tall. Foothills to montane, 7,000 to 9,500'.

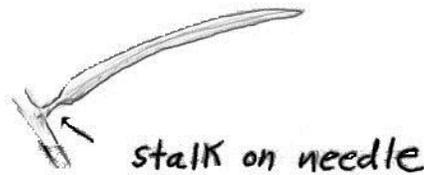
**Colorado Blue spruce, *Picea pungens***

6. Needles somewhat flexible, not very sharp to the touch or spine-tipped, cones very papery, less than 2.5" long, blue color not as obvious, bark thin, in plate-like layers, grayish. Trees of upper montane and subalpine from 8,500 to 12,000'.

**Engelmann Spruce, *Picea engelmannii***

7. Needles with a little stalk on the base, cones hanging down, cones have scales that resemble mouse tails.

**Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii***



7. Needles without a stalk, cones upright on tree, cones do not have long scales ..... 8

8. Needles average 1" or more in length, cones grayish-green, 7, 500 to 10,000'

**White fir, *Abies concolor***

8. Needles average less than one inch, cones dark purple, 8,500' to 12,000'

**Subalpine fir, *Abies lasiocarpa***

Drawings Irene Shante  
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