

Deciduous Conifers

Most conifers are evergreen. When fall comes and we venture out looking for beautiful fall colors, we are looking for maples and other flowering trees, not conifers. However, not all conifers are evergreen. Some are deciduous. That is, the needles lose their green color each fall in a burst of golden color and then fall to the ground.

Larches

The most widespread deciduous conifers are the larches. Ten species of larch grow across the northern continents. Two species of larch grow in the Pacific Northwest. Larches have two kinds of branchlets: Long shoots with needles spread along the shoot, and short shoots with needles at the end in bundles of about 25. Cones usually grow on short shoots, too. Some of the cones have long bracts that protrude beyond the scales, while short bracts are hidden in the scales.

Larches at Hoyt Arboretum

The map below shows where the trees are located in Portland's Hoyt Arboretum.

- 1 Japanese larch** - *Larix kaempferi*. Popular bonsai. Important timber tree.
- 2 Eastern larch** - *Larix laricina*. Native to NE US, Canada, S. central Alaska.
- 3 Dahurian larch** - *Larix gmelinii*. Native to E. Russia, Mongolia and NE China.
- 4 Chinese larch** - *Larix potaninii*. Native to Himalayas. Used for construction.
- 5 Western larch** - *Larix occidentalis*. Native to the Pacific Northwest. Important timber tree.
- 6 European larch** - *Larix decidua*. Important timber tree.



Other deciduous conifers at Hoyt Arboretum

7 Dawn redwood - *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. Fossils of this tree are common in North America, but it was thought to be extinct. Yet it was found alive in China in the 1940's. It's now a popular ornamental. Look for the sign at the north end of Bray Lane next to the *Metasequoia* Oregon Heritage Tree. It was the first dawn redwood to bear cones in North America since the discovery of the species.

Metasequoia glyptostroboides 'Ogdon' These two cultivars grow along the connector trail between Fischer Lane and the Wildwood

8 Bald cypress - *Taxodium distichum*. This native of southeast USA is an important timber tree, and a popular ornamental in the Pacific Northwest. The needles look similar to the dawn redwood, but notice the difference in their placement on the twigs.

Two more deciduous conifers

Golden larch - *Pseudolarix amabilis*. This is the only species in the genus *Pseudolarix*. As the scientific name implies, it is not a true larch (*Larix*), being more closely related to firs and cedars (*Abies* and *Cedrus*). Like these trees, the cones of golden larch sit upright and disintegrate when they disperse their seeds. It is native to eastern China.

Chinese swamp cypress - *Glyptostrobus pensilis*. This is the only living species in the genus *Glyptostrobus*. It's native to southeastern China and northern Vietnam. When the dawn redwood was first discovered, it was placed in this genus, but then classified in its own genus: *Metasequoia*. The species name of the dawn redwood, *glyptostroboides*, recognizes the earlier classification. (No specimen in the arboretum.)

More info

<http://www.conifers.org/pi/Larix.php>

<http://www.conifers.org/cu/Metasequoia.php>

http://www.conifers.org/cu/Taxodium_distichum.php

<http://www.conifers.org/pi/Pseudolarix.php>

<http://www.conifers.org/cu/Glyptostrobus.php>

Other larches

Alpine larch - *Larix lyallii*. Native to the North Cascades, Rocky Mts.

Sikkim larch - *Larix griffithii*. Native to eastern Himalayas. Used for construction.

Masters larch - *Larix mastersiana*. Native to China.

Siberian larch - *Larix sibirica*. Wood similar to European larch.

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