

An Educational Game About Pinecones | Script by Kimya Taheri

Game Link: <https://kimyalastname.itch.io/pinecones>

Key: All regular text is narration. All subheaders + text with [] are notes!

Genre: Comedy/Satire, Thriller/Horror, Simulation

An Educational Game About Pinecones is an homage to 1990s-2000s era educational video games, as well as Planet Earth/nature documentaries.

*"Welcome to a 2000s era educational nature program about pinecones, narrated by a famous nature documentary narrator. Absolutely **nothing** strange going on here."*

SCENE 1: START SCREEN

Welcome to an educational game about pine cones. Take a deep breath, and when you're ready to be bored, press "Start."

[PLAYER PRESSES "START".]

SCENE 2: SELECT THE PINECONE.

Today we're going to look at conifers, or cone bearing trees. If you take a walk in autumn in a place that actually has trees, you're bound to see dozens of them littering the ground. With their conical shape and unique flakes, pine cones are easy to identify and hard to miss.

From this haphazard description, please select the image that correctly represents a pine cone.

[3 PICTURES ON SCREEN, TWO OF THEM ARE VERY OBVIOUSLY INCORRECT.]

[IF CORRECT:] Excellent. You can now identify flora and fauna at a first grade level.

[IF INCORRECT:] You must feel quite embarrassed. In fact, I'm embarrassed for you. I would offer you another try, but that would be far too generous.

SCENE 3: SPELLING THE PINECONE.

Without any frame of reference, please spell the word “pinecone.” It should be noted that if you spell it wrong, everyone, and I mean everyone, will judge you for it.

[SPELLING BOX APPEARS ON SCREEN. PLAYER CAN TYPE IN IT.]

[IF CORRECT:] It must feel good to spell at a second grade level. Good job!

[IF INCORRECT:] Back in my day, we didn’t have autocorrect, we had... oh never mind. Once again, I won’t waste time letting you try again. Remember this moment.

SCENE 4: SELECT THE MALE

Unlike normal trees, that sprout flowers that contain both the male and female parts needed to bear tree children, conifers are, what we call in the plant world, “extra.” There are actually 2 completely separate cones, on the same tree, needed for reproduction. One male, one female. The bulky cones you’ve probably seen are the females. The males are thin and long.

Let’s see if you were paying attention. Select the male pine cone.

[TWO PICTURES OF PINE CONES APPEAR. ONE IS MALE, ONE IS FEMALE, BUT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO TELL THE TWO APART BASED ON THE DESCRIPTION.]

[IF CORRECT:] Your attention span is mediocre, but don’t fret: we need mediocrity to define the average.

[IF INCORRECT:] You know, I’m beginning to think that you’re doing this on purpose. If you are, I don’t appreciate it. I assure you, I will have the last laugh. Pretending to be stupid about pine cones is the very definition of stupidity.

SCENE 5: DO THE DANCE

The male cones create pollen that the wind blows upward towards the female cones. This is how seeds are generated. We are going to recreate this experience now.

Please click the mouse to blow the pollen towards the female.

[NO FAIL STATE HERE! PLAYER CLICKS MOUSE REPEATEDLY. MUSIC STOPS AFTER THIS IS DONE.]

SCENE 6: SEEDS SPREAD...

It can take months, to even years, for the cones to be ready. But eventually, the scales of the female cone hinge open, and release the seeds.

Click now to recreate this experience.

[NO FAIL STATE HERE! PLAYER CLICKS MOUSE. PINECONE MAKES AN EERIE BONE-CRACKING SOUND. UNSETTLING MUSIC BEGINS TO PLAY.]

The breeze scatters these seeds and they drift to the ground. If conditions are favorable, spring will see these seeds begin to grow. After a few decades, these new trees will reach maturity and will begin to make cones of their own.

[SCARY, SWIRLING, DUST-LOOKING PARTICLES SWARM ON SCREEN, BREAKING THE BOUNDS OF THE WINDOWED SCREEN THAT THE PLAYER WAS IN.]

This is a cycle that has been recurring for over 250 million years. Sometimes it is the simplest of cycles that allows species to endure perpetually, forever, and ever, in an environment that continues to change. These cones will outlive you, your children, your entire bloodline. As the world comes to an inevitable halt, the failed results of yet another evolution cycle, the earth wiping the slate clean, you can expect to see these trees. Littering the ground. Tempting the next generation to outlive them.

[DISTORTED:] You Will Never Beat Them.

SCENE 7: GAME CRASHES AND RESTARTS

[OLD WINDOWS UI APPEARS. IF PLAYER PRESSES "ADMINISTRATOR" AND TYPES IN "PINECONE", THE GAME RESTARTS.]