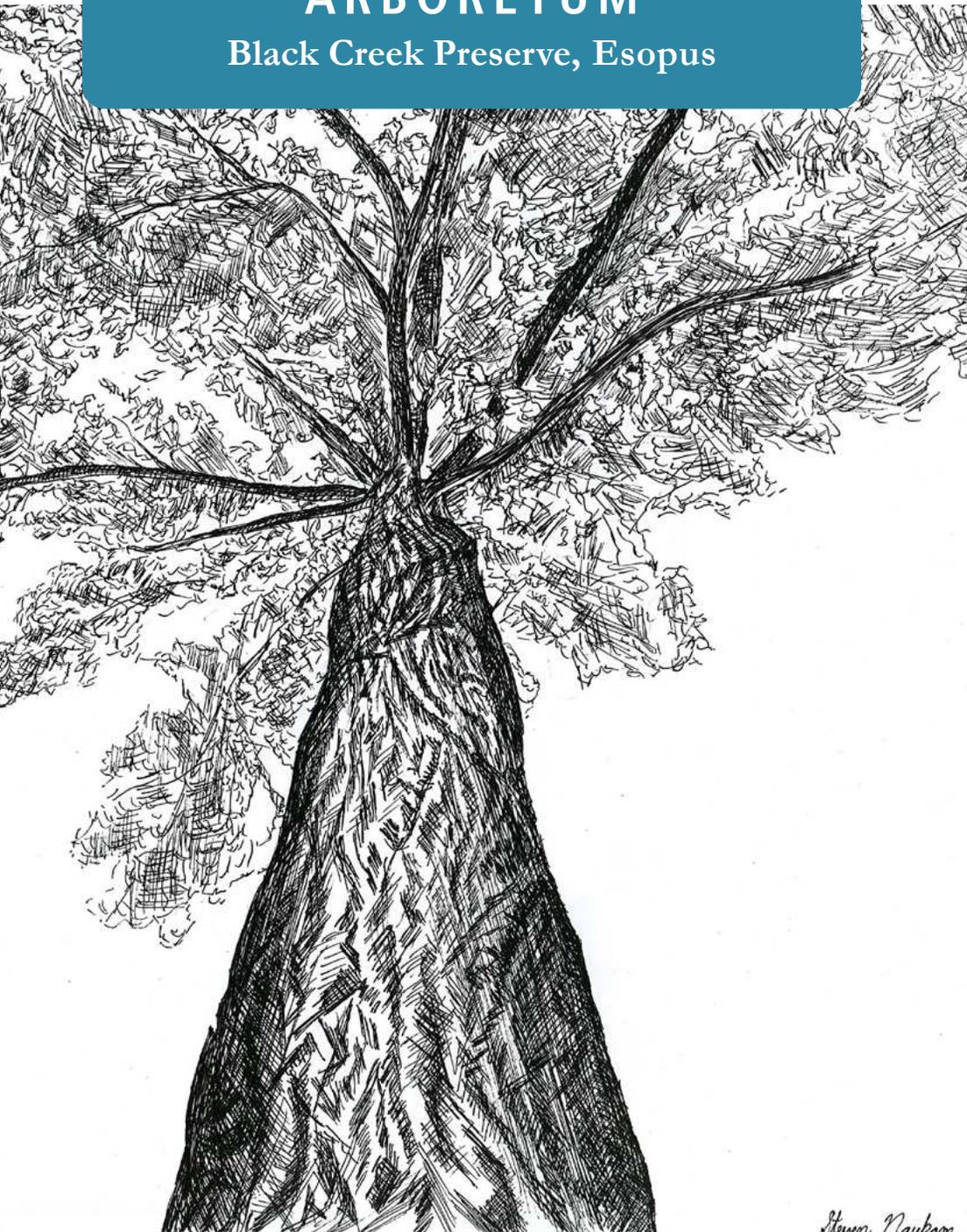


NatureNotes:

ARBORETUM

Black Creek Preserve, Esopus



Steven Nauborn

Who is Scenic Hudson?

We're a group of dedicated people who care about the area we live in—the Hudson River Valley. In 1963, our founders fought to protect Storm King Mountain from being made into a power plant. Since then, we've continued to work together with local communities to protect special places. We've created or enhanced 65 parks and preserves for you to enjoy. For more information about our parks, visit www.scenichudson.org/parks.

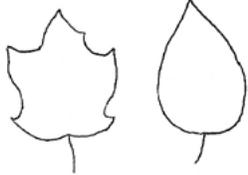
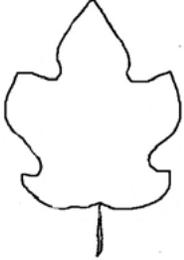
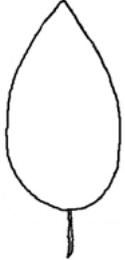
TREE IDENTIFICATION BASICS

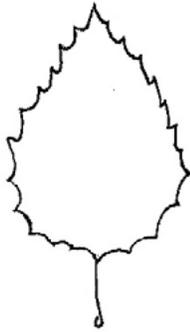
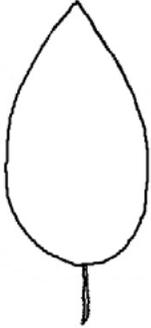
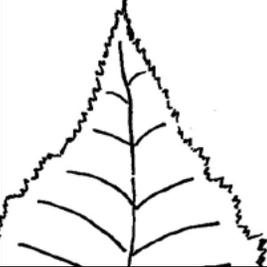
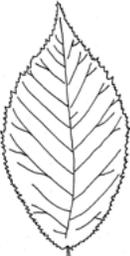
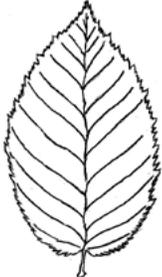
Take notice of all the living things around you. Every tree and plant belongs to a particular species, and identifying them is fun and informative. While this may seem quite challenging if you've never done it before, this guide includes a dichotomous key to assist you. It presents you with a sequence of questions, each with only two options, leading you to the identity of the plant in question. This guide includes 16 common trees and shrubs native to the Hudson Valley, corresponding to the marked plants in Black Creek Arboretum. An arboretum is a scientifically and botanically significant collection of trees.

See if you can use this key to correctly identify the trees before reading the signs!



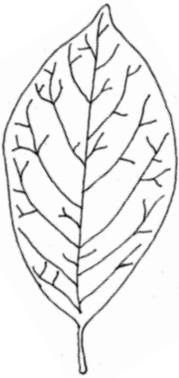
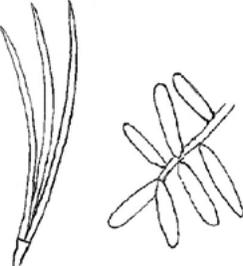
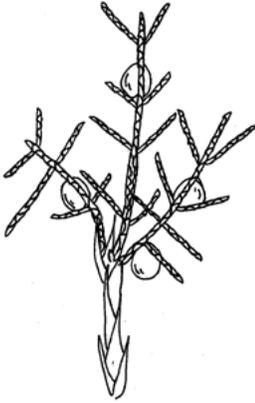
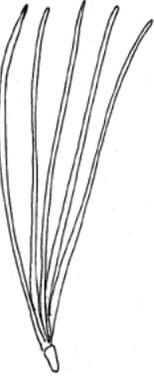
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<p>1</p>	<p>Are the tree's leaves wide and flat (broadleaved)? If yes, go to 2.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Are the leaves needlelike or small and scaly? If yes, go to 13.</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Leaves opposite (leaves are attached to stems and twigs in opposing pairs, directly across from each other)? If yes, go to 3.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves alternate (leaves are attached individually at intervals along twigs; not opposite)? If yes, go to 4.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Do the leaves have 3- to 5- lobes (distinct protrusions, which can be pointed or round), and are they green on top, silvery white on their underside, with fairly shallow indentations between lobes? If yes, this tree is a Red Maple, scientific name: <i>Acer rubrum</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves green on top, pale green below and 5-lobed, with moderate space between the lobes? If yes, this tree is likely a Sugar Maple, <i>Acer saccharum</i>. Its leaves are very similar to the Norway Maple, but that tree's leaves are distinguishable by their milky white sap (can be seen in a broken leaf stem).</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Leaves lobed and the twigs thornless? If yes, go to 5.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves not lobed, go to 8.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Leaves feather-lobed (main lobes branching out along central vein)? If yes, go to 6.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves fan-lobed (main lobes radiating from a point)? If yes, are there four pointed lobes in an overall shape that roughly resembles the outline of a cat's head? If yes, this is a Tulip Tree, <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Do the leaves have seven to nine rounded "finger-like" leaf lobes, fairly evenly sized with moderate spaces between them? If yes, this tree is a White Oak, <i>Quercus alba</i></p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Do the leaves have moderate lobes with pointed tips? If yes, go to 7.</p>	

<p>7</p>	<p>Does each leaf have seven to eleven lobes with pointed tips? Bark smooth and light gray (young trees), develops wide, flat-topped ridges and shallow furrows (older trees)? Acorns up to 1 inch long with a thick, flat cap that resembles a beret? If yes, this tree is a Red Oak, <i>Quercus rubra</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Does each leaf have five to seven lobes with pointed tips? Bark smooth and gray (young trees), becoming thick and very rough, nearly black and deeply furrowed vertically with horizontal breaks (older trees)? Acorns up to ¾ of an inch long with a bowl-shaped cap? If yes, this tree is a Black Oak, <i>Quercus velutina</i>.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Do the leaves have teeth (small points or serrations along the leaf edge)? If yes, go to 9.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves not toothed, go to 12.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Are the teeth blunt and wavy? Is the leaf's overall shape egg-like with an uneven base? If yes, then this shrub is Witchhazel, <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Are the teeth small and pointed? If yes, go to 10.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Leaves single-toothed (one tooth at the end of each leaf vein), dark glossy green and oval-shaped? Bark smooth and gray? If yes, this tree is an American Beech, <i>Fagus grandifolia</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Double-toothed (smaller set of teeth present between larger teeth)? If yes, go to 11.</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>Relatively small tree with light brown bark fractured into loose vertical strips, giving it a shredded appearance? If yes, this tree is a Hophornbeam, <i>Ostrya virginiana</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Bark reddish brown with horizontal stripes (in young trees); dark gray or black and broken up into large, irregular-shaped plates (older trees)? Crushed stems and twigs smell like wintergreen? If yes, this tree is a Black Birch, <i>Betula lenta</i>.</p>	

continued on back page

If you are interested in exploring plant identification further, you can get a field guide to learn more species of plants—there are several hundred kinds of trees and shrubs found in the Northeastern United States alone!

<p>12</p>	<p>Leaves shiny, somewhat leathery and widest toward the tip? Gray bark, and blocky with deep grooves in older, larger trees (resembling alligator skin)? If yes, this tree is a Black Tupelo, <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves elliptical, darker green on top and lighter green underneath, have a spicy odor when crushed (as do berries, twigs and buds)? Grows to a maximum height of 12-15 feet. Bark and twigs brown to gray or olive-green in color and speckled with lightly colored bumps (lenticels)? If yes, this shrub is Northern Spicebush, <i>Lindera benzoin</i>.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>Leaves needlelike? If yes, go to 14.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Leaves small and scale-like, 1/16 inch long, overlapping and attached tightly to twigs? Bark red, brown, or gray and shedding in long wiry strips? Cones look like berries, light green in spring, changing to blue in summer and fall? If yes, this tree is an Eastern Red Cedar, <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>. Some have needlelike leaves about 1/4 inch long in addition to the small scaly leaves.</p>	
<p>14</p>	<p>Needles long and slender? If yes, go to 15</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Needles flat, less than an inch long, shiny green on top with two white lines underneath? Bark fractured, has grooves and brown to gray (sometimes with purple streaks)? Cones small (less than an inch long), hanging, light brown and egg-shaped? If yes, this tree is an Eastern Hemlock, <i>Tsuga canadensis</i>.</p>	
<p>15</p>	<p>Green to blue-green needles up to five inches long, slender, flexible and occurring in bundles (fascicles) of five? Bark fairly smooth and green-gray (young trees); grayish or reddish brown, rougher and more furrowed (older trees)? Cones cylindrical, 3-8 inches long with rounded scales? If yes, this tree is an Eastern White Pine, <i>Pinus strobus</i>.</p>		<p>OR</p> <p>Yellow-green to green needles up to five inches long, twisted, slender and occurring in bundles of three? Bark scaly and dark (young trees); becomes red- or yellow-brown in color with flat plates and furrows (older trees)? Cones egg-shaped, light brown and 2-4 inches long? If yes, this tree is a Pitch Pine, <i>Pinus rigida</i>.</p>	



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