

Trees of Beckwourth Ranger District

Plumas National Forest Beckwourth Ranger District



From mountaintop panoramas to views from valleys floors, trees both near and far add color and texture to the mountains described by John Muir as the Range of Light. Trees are a significant part of the scenic beauty of the Sierra Nevada. Many paved and unpaved roads along with hiking trails in the Beckwourth Ranger District provide opportunity for exploring the forest.

This is a Temperate Coniferous Forest. Temperate Coniferous Forests are divided into six biotic zones. These biotic zones can be seen as a belt-like distribution of ecological communities that reflect changes in topography, climate, moisture and soils. Only two of these biotic zones are commonly found in the Beckwourth Ranger District. They are the Mid-Montane Forest (4,000' to 6,000') and the Upper Montane Forest (6,000' to 8,000').

Conifers

Conifers are distinguished from other trees by their foliage and method of reproduction. With a few exceptions, reproduction is accomplished by bearing cones. Male cones bear pollen and female cones bear seeds. Foliage is usually green needle-like leaves. Typical conifers include pines, firs, and cedars.

Douglas fir

Pseudotsuga menziesii

Height up to 220'. Deer and grouse feed on the dark yellow-green or blue-green needles while squirrels, birds and mice prefer the seeds. Often found with White Fir and Ponderosa Pine in Mid-montane Forests.



Cones:
2"-3" with mouse tail bracts between scales



Needles:
are Soft, single, slender and pointed on all sides of twig

.75" - 1.25"



White Fir

Abies concolor

Height up to 200'. Also called California White Fir is shade tolerant, allowing it to grow under taller trees. Fire suppression during the last century allowed the thin barked younger trees to mature.



Cones: 6"-8" upright

Needles: Single, soft and flat. (Won't roll between fingers) oriented in two rows 2.7-5"



Sugar Pine

Pinus lambertiana

Height up to 230'. Native people used the sweetish resin like chewing gum. It is easily identified by its enormous cones. It is the tallest pine species in the world. Found in Mid-Montane and the Upper Montane Forests to about 7,800'.

Cones: over 8"-23"

Needles: grow in groups of 5 2"-4.3"



Cones: .7"-1.8" winged cones

Needles: Scale-like jointed needles, flattened branch tips



Incense-cedar

Calocedrus decurrens

Height up to 213'. The thick, reddish bark of older trees protects it from some fires. Aromatic wood resists decay and insects and is not prone to splintering making is useful for many manufactured goods. Found in Mid-Montane and Upper Montane Forests.

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Ponderosa Pine

Pinus ponderosa

Height up to 230'. Often grows with and is mistaken for Jeffrey Pine. In fact, Ponderosa and Jeffrey Pines can hybridize making field identification difficult. Grows in Mid-Montane and Upper Montane Forests. Bark of mature trees flakes off in puzzle-piece shapes.



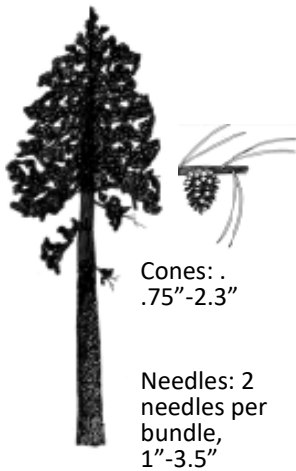
Ponderosa	Cones:	Jeffrey
2"-6" cones, prickles point outward		5"-10" cones, prickles point inward
	Needles	
groups of 3, 5" - 10" long		Groups of 3, 5" - 11" long



Jeffrey Pine

Pinus jeffrey

Height up to 175'. Often grows with and is mistaken for Ponderosa Pine. Bark has a strong vanilla or pineapple odor. Resins from this and most pines have medicinal properties. Grows in Mid-Montane and Upper Montane Forests.



Cones: .75"-2.3"

Needles: 2 needles per bundle, 1"-3.5"

Lodgepole Pine

Pinus contorta

Height up to 110'. Trees make long lightweight poles ideal for use in the construction of Native American tipis of the plains buffalo hunting cultures. Fire is required in maintaining a healthy forest. Thin bark of trees makes them susceptible to fire. Fire will cause cones to open and release their seeds allowing the species to maintain its place in the forest habitat. Found in Upper Montane Forests.



Cones: 4.7"-9", decompose in the tree.

Needles: Single, soft, in 2 rows curved upward. Will roll between fingers.

California Red Fir

Abies magnifica

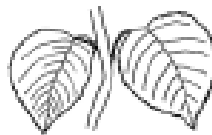
Height up to 185'. This is a popular Christmas tree. Young trees have light gray colored bark. Bark of older trees is light brown with dark streaks. It is often called a 'Silvertip'. It is closely related to Noble Fir and is oftentimes confused with White Fir. Found in Upper Montane Forests.

Other Common Trees and Shrubs

Black Cottonwood

Populus trichocarpa

Height to 100'. This tree has dark green, oval leaves turning yellow and orange in the fall. Bark is smooth and gray that furrows with age. It prefers wetter soils of stream banks and other riparian areas.



Quaking Aspen

Populus tremuloides

Height up to 50'. The green, nearly round leaves of this tree "quake" in a breeze because of their flattened stalks. The white, smooth bark makes it easy to spot year-round. Gold and orange autumn leaves add spectacular displays of fall color



Mountain Alder

Alnus tenuifolia

Height up to 30'. Can be either a shrub with spreading branches or a small tree with several trunks. Found on the banks of streams or in canyons in moist soils.



Greenleaf Manzanita

Arctostaphylos patula

Up to 6'. One of the most widespread manzanitas, it prefers rocky slopes. A hard waxy coat on the seeds sometimes needs melting by fire to sprout



Red Stemmed Dogwood

Cornus sericea

4' - 12' Less flamboyant display than other Dogwoods. Found in wetter areas often in great abundance. Very useful in stabilizing stream banks in restoration efforts.

