Dichotomous Key: Evergreen Plants in Newfoundland and Labrador

This simple dichotomous key was developed by Dr. M.A.J. Collins and published in the booklet Winter Ecology (Oxen Pond Botanic Park, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1976). It is a very useful tool when learning to identify some common evergreen shrubs and trees in Newfoundland and Labrador.

1. a. Normally trees, cones often present ................................................................. 2
   b. Normally shrubs, cones absent ................................................................. 6

2. a. Needles very long and thin 5cm + ................................................................. 3
   b. Needles shorter than 2.5cm ........................................................................ 4

3. a. Needles in pairs from a common base ......................................................... Red Pine
   b. Needles in 5's from a common base ............................................................ White Pine

4. a. Needles less than 1.2 cm narrow, bark without resin blobs, cones drooping .... 5
   b. Needles more than 1.2 cm wider, bark covered with resin bubbles, cones erect .... Balsam Fir

5. a. Twigs covered with brown hair, cones almost spherical .......................... Black Spruce
   b. Twigs hairless, cones long 3.8 cm + .......................................................... White Spruce

6. a. Needles thin and sharp, painted green above and white below .................. Dwarf Juniper
   b. Leaves not sharp needled ........................................................................ 7

7. a. Leaves green above, covered with hairs below ........................................... 8
   b. Leaves green above and below .................................................................... 9

8. a. Leaves twice as long as broad, underside covered with rust colored hairs .......... Labrador Tea
   b. Leaves at least 4 times as long as broad, underside covered with white hairs .......... Bog Laurel

9. a. Leaves bright green, waxy in appearance, less than 1.2 cm wide ................ Leatherleaf
   b. Leaves dull green, oval shaped, quite often with brown patches on leaves .......... Sheep Laurel

Reference: