



Dichotomous Key: Common Trees and Shrubs in Newfoundland and Labrador *Botanists in Training*

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. | Buds opposite, branches opposite | 2 |
| | b. | Buds and branches not opposite, either alternate or scattered around stem | 8 |
| 2. | a. | Branches brittle and light, no terminal bud, and no lateral buds near tip | <i>Sambucus pubens</i> (Red Elderberry) |
| | b. | Branches flexible, terminal bud present, lateral buds near tip | 3 |
| 3. | a. | Twigs wine or red colored, buds small | 4 |
| | b. | Twigs not wine or red colored, buds larger | 5 |
| 4. | a. | Twigs and older branches red in color, buds slightly stalked, usually small shrubs in moist areas | <i>Cornus stolonifera</i> (Red Osier Dogwood) |
| | b. | Only young twigs red, older branches light grey, buds not stalked, usually tall shrubs or trees | <i>Acer spicatum</i> (Mountain Maple) |
| 5. | a. | Buds brownish in color, long and thin, normally terminal buds 1.2 cm or more in length | <i>Viburnum cassinoides</i> (Northern Wild Raisin) |
| | b. | Buds reddish or black, oval in shape, terminal buds less than 1.2 cm in length | 6 |
| 6. | a. | Buds domed in shape, black, normally tall trees | <i>Fraxinus nigra</i> (Black Ash) |
| | b. | Buds roughly oval and red, normally shrubs | 7 |
| 7. | a. | Buds longer than broad, terminal bud less than 0.5 cm, twigs stout, not bearing berries | <i>Acer rubrum</i> (Red Maple) |
| | b. | Buds almost spherical, terminal bud about 1 cm, twigs slender, quite often bearing red berries | <i>Viburnum edule</i> (Squashberry) |
| 8. | a. | Buds normally 1.2 cm in length or longer | 9 |
| | b. | Buds normally 0.6 cm or less in length | 11 |
| 9. | a. | Buds large, blackish in color and sticky | <i>Sorbus sp.</i> (Dogberry) |
| | b. | Buds not so large, not black or sticky | 10 |
| 10. | a. | Buds large and brown, definitely aromatic, not bearing berries, normally trees | <i>Populus balsamifera</i> (Balsam Poplar) |
| | b. | Buds long but thin, brown or purplish, quite often bearing single black berries, normally shrubs | <i>Amelanchier sp.</i> (Chuckley Pear) |

- | | | | |
|-----|----|--|--|
| 11. | a. | Buds closely pressed onto stem, and not possessing more than one bud scale | <i>Salix sp.</i> (Willows) |
| | b. | Buds not closely pressed onto stem, and often possessing 3 or more bud scales | 12 |
| 12. | a. | Buds normally 0.6 cm or slightly more | 13 |
| | b. | Buds normally 0.3 cm or less | 18 |
| 13. | a. | Normally 2 types of buds on older trees, smaller leaf buds and fatter flower buds, older bark definitely greenish | <i>Populus tremuloides</i> (Trembling Aspen) |
| | b. | Trees or shrubs, only one type of bud; sometimes possessing immature catkins, older bark whitish, grey or brown | 14 |
| 14. | a. | Buds slim, spindle shaped, purplish or brown, sometimes bearing single black berries, but no catkins | <i>Amelanchier sp.</i> (Chuckley Pear) |
| | b. | Buds not slim, normally nearly pointed oval, brownish in color, sometimes possessing catkins but not berries | 15 |
| 15. | a. | Trees or shrubs, usually possessing catkins without bitter almond taste | 16 |
| | b. | Small trees or tall shrubs, not possessing catkins, twigs with bitter almond taste | <i>Prunus virginiana</i> (Choke Cherry) |
| 16. | a. | Small or large shrubs, possessing buds and immature catkins, and old 'cones' old bark brown to grey | 17 |
| | b. | Small or large trees, sometimes possessing catkins but not cones, old bark normally whitish | <i>Betula sp.</i> (Birch) |
| 17. | a. | Larger shrubs of wet areas, with rounded, obviously stalked buds, and drooping catkins | <i>Alnus rugosa</i> (Speckled Alder) |
| | b. | Smaller shrubs common in a variety of habitats especially roadsides, buds pointed, not normally stalked, catkins erect . | <i>Alnus crispa</i> (Downy Alder) |
| 18. | a. | Young twigs covered with obvious fine white fuzz, sometimes bearing single black berries, buds about 0.3 cm | <i>Pyrus floribunda</i> (Chokeberry) |
| | b. | Twigs not covered with white fuzz, and not bearing black berries, buds about 1.5 mm | 19 |
| 19. | a. | Several minute buds at tip of each twig, quite often infected with 'Black Knot' fungus (black swellings on twigs) | <i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i> (Pin Cherry) |
| | b. | Only 1 terminal bud, not infected with Black Knot | 20 |
| 20. | a. | Trees, stems covered with straw colored scales, buds small dark brown, quite often bearing cones | <i>Larix laricina</i> (Tamarack) |
| | b. | Small to large shrubs, with ashy grey older bark, tips of twigs purplish or brown, not bearing cones | <i>Nemopanthus mucronata</i> (Mountain Holly) |