

*Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

Needles: 3-5 inches long, in bundles of 5, soft and flexible, blue-green, triangular cross-section.

Cone: cylindrical, slender, long stalk, 4-8 inches long, often with white resin on the tip of each scale. Cones are pendulous and fall to the ground intact.

Bark: dark grey and slightly furrowed.

Habitat: Northern forests and upland sites. Prefers moist, sandy, acidic soils.

White Pine is our largest conifer.



*Red Pine (*Pinus resinous*)

Needles: 4-6 inches long, in bundles of 2, dark green, straight, brittle, pointed, breaks when bent

Cone: oval, 1- 2 1/2 inches long, not prickly, often in clusters, remains on tree for a few years.

Bark: silvery to reddish brown, scale-like bark peels off.

Habitat: dry sandy soils, sun.

Sometimes called Norway pine. Grows quickly after fires.



Conifer walk

Enjoy walking the nature trails at Holy Wisdom and the silence of the season.

Most conifers are found around Lost Lake and along the highway. Visitors are always welcome for contemplative walks.

About Holy Wisdom

In 1953, the Benedictine sisters first set down roots on this hill overlooking Lake Mendota. Since then, they have built a strong tradition of caring for the earth, rooted in the Benedictine values of stability and respect for all creation. Some of the sisters' first projects caring for the earth included planting conifers, many of which are still present today.

We welcome you to explore the trails, prairies and woodlands at Holy Wisdom Monastery and hope you enjoy this oasis of quiet beauty. Please consider joining Friends of Wisdom Prairie to support our work caring for the earth. Friends are also invited to join volunteer work days and attend environmental education events. To learn more or join, please visit HolywisdomMonastery.org.

Created by Sylvia Marek, Peter Marshall & Julie Melton – 12/20



Holy Wisdom Monastery

Weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life

4200 County Road M, Middleton, WI 53562
HolyWisdomMonastery.org • 608-836-1631

Conifers of Holy Wisdom



Conifers are not just evergreens and not just pine trees. Conifers have needlelike leaves and cones that produce seeds. The seeds provide nourishment for wildlife, especially birds such as finches. Conifers include pines, spruces, junipers, arborvitae, firs, larches and yews. The following conifers are native to Wisconsin. The ones with an asterisk* can be found here at Holy Wisdom. How many can you find?

Wisconsin native conifer trees

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| * White pine | * White spruce |
| * Red pine | Black spruce |
| Jack pine | * Canada hemlock |
| Balsam fir | * Eastern red cedar |
| Tamarack | * Eastern arborvitae |

***Eastern red cedar
(Juniperus virginiana)**

Needles: 1/2 inch long, scaly, overlapping, sharp-tipped, (immature needles prickly) round in cross-section

Cones: berry-like, 1/8 - 1/4 inch, bluish-gray

Habitat: dry soils, old fields and prairie slopes, sun-loving

Used for pencils, oil for perfumes, soaps, moth repellents.



***Eastern arborvitae (Thuja occidentalis)**

Needles and branches: flattened with overlapping scales, soft, very fragrant.

Cones: oblong, 1/4 - 1/2 inch long, thin brown scales, upright clusters.

Habitat: Swamps, shores, slopes, cliffs.

Also called Northern white cedar. Was used for canoe frames, shingles, posts, cedar tea rich in vitamin C.



***White spruce (Picea glauca)**

Needles: 1/2 - 3/4 inch, single, usually squared in cross-section, sharp tipped and prickly, not flattened, grow all around the twig, bluish-green with white lines or dots on sides, pungent odor when crushed.

Buds have dry scales. Twigs hairless.

Cones: 1- 2 1/2 inches, smooth to touch, single or in clusters, scales flexible and papery, cones hang down, fall when ripe. Cones can last a few years on tree.

Habitat: boreal forests, uplands and bogs



Norway spruce (Picea abies)

Needles: 1/2 to 1 inch, single, sharp, slight curve, square in cross-section, deep green, pendulous branches, bark on twigs orange to reddish-brown, twig smooth.

Cones: brown, papery, 4-7 inches long.

Habitat: used in landscaping. Non-native, from Europe, very abundant.

Burgundy colored pitch was used for varnishes and medicines.



***Canada hemlock (Tsuga canadensis)**

Needles: 1/4 - 1/2 inch, flat, round-tipped, on slender stalks, borne on two sides of rough twig, dark green above, whitish lines below.

Cones: 5/8 - 1 inch long, oval, very small on end of twig hanging down.

Habitat: cool, moist, shady ravines and north-facing hillsides.

Over harvested by the tanning industry up to 100 years ago. Look for a hemlock on the west side of Lost Lake.



Tamarack (Larix laricina)

Needles: 3/4 - 1 1/4 inches long, radiating in clusters from blunt spurs, soft, slender, dark green, turning smoky gold in fall before shedding.

Cones: 1/2 - 3/4 inch long, egg-shaped, purplish red, turning brown, rounded scales.

Habitat: bogs, swamps, lakeshores, slopes.

The only deciduous native conifer. Also called Eastern Larch. Not currently planted at Holy Wisdom.

