

Guide to Identifying Austrian, Ponderosa, and Scotch Pines

The first step in identifying these pines is to make sure the tree in question is a pine species. Closely examine the base of the evergreen needles. The needles of most of the pine species are joined at the base in multiples of two, three, or five needles per bundle depending on the species. **Other conifer (evergreen) species do not have their needles joined at the base. Their needles occur singularly.** Listed below are some of the common characteristics of Austrian, Ponderosa, and Scotch pines.

Austrian Pine (non native to North America)

Needles: 4 to 6 inches in length. Occur in bundles of 2.

Bark: Grey in color with black furrows forming a blocky pattern.

Buds: Large, silver in color.

Cones: 2 to 3 inches long.

Ponderosa Pine (native to North America including such states as Colorado and Nebraska)

Needles: 5 to 10 inches in length. Occur in bundles of 2 or 3.

Bark: Brown in color on young trees, becoming cinnamon-red on older trees.

Buds: Large, silver-brown in color.

Cones: 3 to 6 inches long with a small spine at the end of the cone scales.

Scotch Pine (non native to North America)

Needles: 1 to 4 inches in length. Occur in bundles of 2.

Bark: Brown in color on young trees, upper trunk becoming orange-red on older trees.

Buds: Small, brown in color.

Cones: 1 ½ to 2 ½ long.