

Kid's Corner



Pines

Pine trees look beautiful after a snow storm, but they have much to offer than just looks!

Hemlock & White Pine

Two of the most common pine trees in Pennsylvania are the **Eastern Hemlock**, the state tree. And the **White Pine**.

The Hemlock has short needles, with two white lines on the underside. And the needles are dark green on the top & light green on the bottom. The white pine is the only pine to have long needles in a cluster of six.

The age of a pine tree is determined by the **whorls**. These are the branches that encircle the tree at the same point. They usually grow one whorl a year. Stand under a large pine and look up to see the whorls.

Pine trees are important to wildlife and to Native peoples who in turn taught the incoming settlers about their many uses. They were used to treat various diseases: colds, coughs, headaches, sore throats, cuts, bruises & insect bites. The inner bark was pounded into a paste for wounds and sores. The resin or pitch was scraped from the tree and applied to cuts. They are also good emergency food for anyone who is lost. The needles and inner bark provide quick energy from the vitamin C that they contain.

Wildlife Food

Our wildlife depends on the pine trees, especially in the winter. They provide food from the scales of the pine cones. The scales contain two-winged seeds. Many different wintering birds eat the seeds, as do squirrels, mice and chipmunks. The ruffed grouse, Pennsylvania's state bird, cottontail rabbits, and white tailed deer eat the needles and buds. The insects and spiders found under the branches also become meals for the wildlife. Porcupines make their winter homes in the pine trees! They can stay there for weeks, eating the bark from the branches.

Nature's Apartment House

Since the pines keep their needles, they provide protection for many kinds of wildlife throughout the year. Wild turkeys roost in tall pines, as do owls, hawks, doves, and blue jays. While the ring-neck pheasant (originally from China), bobwhite (quail) & ruffed grouse will stay under the lower branches for warmth and protection. The white tailed deer stay here too. In fact, the great-horned owl may build its nest and incubate the eggs during the coldest part of the winter! The pines really are Nature's apartment houses!



Bird Treat

**Tie a string onto a pine cone.
Mix peanut butter and bird seed together and stuff into the cone.
Then hang it outdoors
For the birds to enjoy.**