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# Winter Tree Finder: A Manual For Identifying Deciduous Trees In Winter (Eastern US) (Nature Study Guides)



## Synopsis

Enjoy getting to know your trees even in winter, with this key to identifying deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves in the winter) by looking at twigs, buds, fruits, and other features. Explains structure of twigs and shows habitat and range of native and some widely introduced trees.

Illustrated with the author's line drawings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The "Winter Tree Finder" by May Theilgaard Watts and Tom Watts is a compact little gem. I have not been able to find such a comprehensive and easily portable guide to using leaf scars, buds, and twigs to identify trees in any other source. The entire book is only 58 pages long and easily fits in a pocket or backpack. Page 1 includes a nice diagram and description of the parts of a twig. Then you progress through a series of questions and drawings that helps you arrive at the identification of the tree. The last few pages include an index and the rear cover has a little measuring rule. On the whole, this is a useful and fun guide to trees while hiking in the winter.

On a 'Winter Tree ID Hike' at a local nature center, we were given this book to use as a reference. We practiced it & found that we could all easily identify trees with it - but it did take some time to READ, COMPREHEND & PRACTICE before we were all proficient. Some took a little longer &, in every case, it was because they tried to short cut the process. So if you're having trouble using it, go back & re-read. It's really quite easy, once you get the hang of it. For such a small book, it packs a

lot of trees into it - Eastern North America only. You won't find hybrids, some imports (garden) trees, but it packs in over 100 common trees & can lead anyone into a quick, accurate identification with very little practice. It's small enough to fit into a back pocket without a bulge, which means I'm more likely to have it with me when I want it. That's the biggest plus. The more comprehensive books are OK, but they're always back at the house when I need them or in the way as I walk through the woods & want to take a picture. Not this book! I have several tree ID books & I may outgrow this one. But I haven't outgrown "The Tree Finder" by the same authors (for trees with leaves) & I've been using it for a couple of years on a pretty regular basis. Often I'll think I've found a tree that won't be in it, but there it is. It's been so worthwhile that I got a second copy to keep in the truck.

This little book will teach you to be MUCH MORE observant of the features of a twig on a tree you are trying to identify. Without the leaves of Spring and summer to distract you (and make the job easier?) - You look closer at the true differences of every tree, and you learn much more about trees in the process. Your powers of observation will increase 10 fold!

This is a fine little guide. It's close to the perfect field guide on this under-treated subject--physically small, light and reasonably complete. If your nature rambles don't stop when it gets cold, you should consider this little volume.

This book does a very sensible job of helping people identify trees when the normal foliage is missing.

As a certified arborist I was having a little trouble with my winter i.d. of trees. This little book has helped tremendously.

I like the way this book allows anyone to identify trees in winter. Its small size makes it easy to carry on a hike. A must for the backpack.

I love the idea of this booklet because where I live (New England) we have long winters. And these authors obviously know their stuff. I credit them for trying to make what's obviously a tricky process, simple, but when I went out into the woods with this guide I found it just wasn't practical. CONS1. Identifying actual twigs in the woods wasn't as easy as following along with the "if this, then this" steps. There is a lot of gray area and a lot that had me scratching my head. Here are two

examples: "If there are several scattered vein scars on a slightly-raised leaf scar, and the pith is 5-sided or star-shaped, it is an OAK." What does "slightly-raised" mean? I don't have any reference point to measure it against. "If the leaf scars are marked with 3 to 5 vein scars; and two buds, depressed, looking like craters on the Moon, push out above the leaf scar; and if the pith is thick and salmon-colored, it is Kentucky Coffee Tree." Now, I must note, they explain what leaf and vein scars and piths are in the front of the book, but even so, I found myself saying, "Well, it sort of looks like that but, then again ... ." Or, "well, it has some of those characteristics, but not all."<sup>2</sup> They include black and white illustrations of twigs to help you along. But, again, they weren't definitive enough in some instances---which forces you to guess, especially when it comes to the colors they describe. For example, "Light satiny gray" or "darker, pewter-gray. Perhaps most people know the difference, but I had to come back and look it up. And that's just one example. There are also several examples like this when it comes to texture.<sup>3</sup> Some of the twigs to the larger trees are WAY too high to ever have a shot at getting them. And if you're in a thickly wooded area like I'm in, with lots of different trees, you can't just find one on the ground and know that it belongs to the tree it's next to. You would probably need binoculars to accurately identify which branch belongs to which tree in some cases.

**PROS**<sup>1</sup>. It's perfectly sized. It fits right in your pocket.<sup>2</sup> It has potential. If they had photos, I think this would work. I realize that would jack up the price and probably the size up of the book, but I would be willing to pay to have a guide that did this. Perhaps this would be better as a smart-phone app (I don't own one so I don't know if this even exists).

**MY RECOMMENDATION** Wait until spring rolls around and the trees start blooming. Then get a tree guide and go outside and try again. That's what I plan to do. I got "What Tree is That?" from Arbor Day Foundation, which has colorful illustrations. However, I can't vouch one way or the other about how helpful it is. I'll have to wait a couple of months for that.

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