

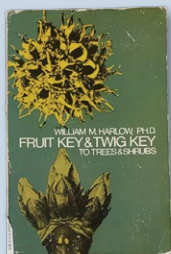
Excellent Winter Tree ID Books

BY BRADLEY SIMPSON

Winter Tree Finder

by May Theilgaard Watts (1970)

This deceptively small book is a great introductory tool for identifying common deciduous trees east of the Rocky Mountains and north of Florida. It is an inexpensive and handy pocket-sized key that is best used to identify trees in winter. Illustrations and general range maps are provided for each species. A 5-inch ruler is available on the back cover of the guide. Our favorite for beginners and hikers.



Fruit Key and Twig Key to Trees and Shrubs

by William M. Harlow (1946)

As declared in the title, this book offers two separate identification keys: one for fruits, one for twigs. The fruit key covers 120 deciduous and evergreen species while the twig key covers 160 deciduous species. Because this guide was produced almost 80 years ago, it does not include the more recently introduced non-native species. It remains an excellent and easy-to-understand resource for identifying woody plants in winter with black and white pictures of many features. It does not include a ruler so you might want to draw your own.

Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast

by Michael Wojtech (2011)

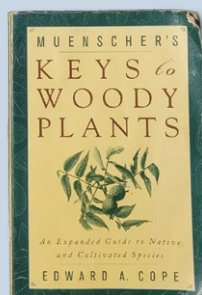
This unique field guide prioritizes bark characteristics as an identification tool for trees found in the northeast region of the US. It is not a comprehensive guide for the trees of Maryland and does not offer any keys. However, it provides a detailed description of how bark forms and how this knowledge can be used to identify trees. Those who learn better when they understand underlying mechanisms will cherish this book. High quality colored images of bark are provided, along with both 8-inch and 20-cm rulers.



Muenschner's Keys to Woody Plants:

An Expanded Guide to Native and Cultivated Species

by Edward A. Cope (2001)



This book is more complete than the others on this list but it is more challenging to use. It offers three keys and includes native, naturalized, and landscaped trees, shrubs, and woody vines found east of the Mississippi River. There are separate summer and winter keys to genera. Each genus has its own key using summer features and for common genera, a winter key to species is provided. Each couplet in the key uses multiple features, rather than just 2, to separate options. This book relies heavily on botanical terminology and has no pictures! It is a must-have for the advanced tree hunter. Both 6-in and 15-cm rulers are provided.

A majestic white oak and a young flowering dogwood stand out in the leafless forest of Patapsco State Park. Photo by Bradley Simpson.