

Dichotomous Key For This Guide – What Is A Dichotomous Key ?

A **dichotomous key** is a tool that allows the user to determine the identity of items in the natural world, such as trees, wildflowers, mammals, reptiles, rocks, and fish. **Keys** consist of a series of choices that lead the user to the correct name of a given item. For **example**, in tree identification, a **dichotomous key** might ask whether the tree has leaves or needles. ... As the name suggests, a **dichotomous key** arrives at the answer to species identification by presenting a series of questions with two possible answers.

Key for this Guide

Q1: Does the tree have leaves that hug the twig and are scale-like?
See pages 9-11.

OR

Does the tree bear cones and have leaves that are needle-like?
Go to Q5.

OR

Does the tree have leaves that are broad, with a blade? Go to Q2.

Q2: Are the leaves simple? Go to Q3.

OR

Are the leaves compound? Go to Q4.

Q3: Are these simple leaves opposite? Go to Q6.

OR

Are these simple leaves alternate? Go to Q7.

Q4: Are these compound leaves opposite? See pages 36-39.

OR

Are these compound leaves alternate? Go to Q10.

Q5: Are these needles arranged in clusters of 2 to 5 or more?

See pages 12-20.

OR

Are these needles arranged singly (not in clusters)?

See pages 21-27.

Q6: Are these simple, opposite leaves unlobed? See pages 28-30.

OR

Are these simple, opposite leaves lobed? See pages 31-35.

Q7: TREES WITH SIMPLE ALTERNATE LEAVES PAGES 40-90.

Are these simple alternate leaves unlobed? Go to Q8.

OR

Are these simple alternate leaves lobed? Go to Q9.

OR

Are the leaves lobed and unlobed on the same tree?

See pages 40-41.

Q8: Are the flowers showy or the fruit fleshy? See pages 40-56.

OR

Is the fruit a nut with or without a husk? See pages 72-73.

OR

Is the fruit not as above? See pages 57-71.

Q9: Is the fruit a nut with a cap (acorn)? See pages 74-86.

OR

Is the fruit not as above? See pages 87-90.

Q10: TREES WITH ALTERNATE COMPOUND LEAVES
PAGES 91-104.

Is the fruit a nut with a green husk? See pages 91-97.

OR

Is the fruit a legume or samara, or does it occur in dense clusters?

See pages 98-104.

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