

CONIFEROUS & DECIDUOUS PLANTS

DECIDUOUS PLANTS



Deciduous plants lose their leaves and become dormant in the winter

CONIFEROUS PLANTS

Coniferous plants do not lose their leaves and remain functional all year.



WHY DO DECIDUOUS TREES LOSE THEIR LEAVES?

Plants use a process called **photosynthesis** to grow. **Water and sunlight** are key components of photosynthesis. **Chlorophyll** gives plants their **green color** and allows the tree to turn sunlight into food. In **fall and winter**, trees receive **less sunlight and water**. Therefore deciduous trees cannot produce enough food through photosynthesis to grow. This results in trees **losing leaves in the winter**. Deciduous trees go **dormant** during the winter, meaning the trees **slow down** their processes and **do not grow new leaves**. Once winter is over and deciduous trees get enough sunlight, they will **regrow their leaves** and continue converting sunlight into energy.



HOW DO CONIFEROUS TREES STAY GREEN ALL YEAR?



Coniferous trees are also called **Evergreen** trees because they stay green all year. The reason conifers do not lose their leaves is all about the **shape of the leaves**. Conifers have **thin, needle-like leaves** with a **waxy coating**. These special leaves allow the the plant to **retain more water during the winter** than deciduous trees, and in turn they can keep their leaves and photosynthesize during the winter. Most coniferous trees have pinecones (hence the name CONiferous).

HOW CAN YOU TELL WHICH TREE IS WHICH?

Look at the leaves! Deciduous trees and plants have broad, flat leaves that change color in the fall. Think of an oak, maple, or birch tree. Coniferous leaves are thin and needle-shaped and always remain green. Think of a pine, juniper, or cedar tree.

These leaves are **broad** and **flat**. you can easily see the **veins** in these leaves as well. These are deciduous leaves!



These leaves are **skinny** and shaped like **needles**. These are coniferous tree leaves! You can also tell from the **pinecone** that this tree is coniferous.

Salt Dough Impressions

Evergreen trees keep their leaves all year, unlike deciduous trees that lose their leaves in the fall. Evergreen trees have needle-like leaves with a thick waxy coating that allow them to preserve more water and continue the process of photosynthesis through the winter! Go outside and explore evergreen trees before this craft. Find a sprig or two of evergreen and bring it inside to use as a stamp.



Materials

- sprig of evergreen
- string
- cutting board or parchment paper
- measuring cups
- straw
- all purpose flour
- table salt
- water
- mixing spoon
- bowl
- oven (optional)

Instructions

1. In a bowl, combine flour, salt, and water. Mix until combined.
 - a. The ratio for salt dough is 1/2 cup flour, 1/4 cup water, and 1/4 cup salt. This recipe yields enough dough for 3 ornaments. Scale this recipe to your group!
2. Once combined, remove from the bowl onto cutting board or parchment paper and knead with your hands into a big ball. Then Flatten the dough into a sheet (about 1/4th inch thick).
3. Use a cookie cutter, the edge of a 1 cup measuring cup, or freehand with a knife to cut the shape out.
4. Align the evergreen sprigs on the ornament. Once aligned, use the bottom of a measuring cup the same size as the ornament to press gently down in the ornament. Lift up the measuring cup and remove all the plants from the dough.
5. Use a straw to poke a hole for the string at the top of the ornament.
6. Move dough onto a baking sheet and bake in the oven at 200 degrees for 2 hours (keep an eye on the dough so it does not burn or bubble), OR allow to dry on the counter for 2 days (until completely dry and solid).
7. Once dry, tie a string through the hole and hang on a tree, wall, or anywhere you want to add some seasonal decor!