Common Trees of the Palouse

**Ponderosa pine**  *Pinus ponderosa*  
**Form:** Mid-sized conifer, up to 150 feet tall. Symmetrical trunk.  
**Bark:** Brownish-black on vigorous young trees, turning to an orange or cinnamon color as diameter growth slows. Always scaly with deep furrows on mature trees.  
**Leaves:** Needles in bunches of three. Flexible, yellowish-green, 5-8 inches long.  
**Cones:** Ovate, 3-6 in. long. Cone scales have prickly tip.  
**Habitat:** Dry savannas to moist forests. This is almost always the vanguard tree in the prairie/forest interface.

**Douglas-fir**  *Pseudotsuga menziesii*  
**Form:** Mid-sized conifer up to 180 ft. tall. Compact, pyramidal crown with irregular branching habit. Branches upward spreading to drooping.  
**Bark:** Rough, very thick, reddish-brown, separated by irregular deep furrows.  
**Leaves:** Linear, flattened, blue-green needles. 1 inch long, spirally arranged on twigs.  
**Cones:** Pendent, reddish-brown, oblong-cylindrical, 2-4 in. long, with three lobed bracts protruding from scales.  
**Habitat:** Dry to moist forests.

**Grand fir**  *Abies grandis*  
**Form:** Large conifer, up to 260 ft. tall. Primary branches distinctly opposite.  
**Bark:** Smooth and grayish with resin blisters when young. Aging to ashy brown with thick, deep furrows.  
**Leaves:** Flat needles, about 1 inch long. End of needle rounded and notched. Dark green with two white bands underneath. Distinctly two ranked, forming two flat rows along branch.  
**Cones:** Upright, 2-4 inches long. Disintegrates on tree.  
**Habitat:** Moist forests.

**Western larch**  *Larix occidentalis*  
**Form:** Large conifer, up to 200 ft. tall. Short open crown. Butt of trunk often swollen.  
**Bark:** Initially thin and scaly, becoming very thick and deeply furrowed into large plates. Flaking into cinnamon-red scales.  
**Leaves:** Deciduous, 15-30 needles borne on short spur. Pale green, becoming pale yellow and falling in late fall.  
**Cones:** Oblong, 1-2 in. long. Thin, borne upright.  
**Habitat:** Dry forests.
**Englemann spruce** *Picea englemannii*
Form: Large conifer, up to 180 ft. tall. Crown spirelike, branches extending to the ground.
Bark: Thin, brownish-red, scaly.
Leaves: Short, rigid needles. 1-2 in. long, blue-green, pointed. 4-angled in cross-section. Born singly on a peg which remains on the tree after the needle is shed.
Cones: Oblong, 1-2 in. long. Light tan-brown, scales paper thin. Cones droop from branches.
Habitat: Dry to moist forests.

**Western white pine** *Pinus monticola*
Form: Large conifer, up to 230 ft. tall. Symmetrical crown with slender, drooping branches.
Bark: Very thin when young, grey and smooth, with resin blisters. Becoming finely checked into small, dark grey squares.
Leaves: Needles in bunches of five. 2-4 inches long, blue-green. Slender and flexible, tip blunt.
Cones: Narrow and curved, 5-15 inches long. Thin, unarmad scales.
Habitat: Moderate to moist sites.

**Western hemlock** *Tsuga heterophylla*
Form: Large conifer, up to 170 ft. tall. Narrow pyramidal crown with drooping top branch.
Bark: Scaly and russet-brown. Becoming dark with widely separated furrows with age.
Leaves: Short dark green needles, half an inch or less. Attached on a short stem parallel to the branch with needles perpendicular to the branch. Grooved above.
Cones: Less than 1 inch long, light brown, thin scales.
Habitat: Moist sites

**Western redcedar** *Thuja plicata*
Form: Large, tapering conifer, up to 180 ft. tall. Buttressed, fluted, trunk, with drooping branches.
Bark: Thin, cinammon-red, grayish brown on older trees. Very fibrous, easily separates into long strips.
Leaves: Scalelike, in opposite pairs. Small sub-branches form flat sprays.
Cones: About 1/3 inch long and pointing back towards the tree. Thin, spine-tipped scales.
Habitat: Moist sites and bottomlands.

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