ENGLEFIELD
ESTATE

Conifer Trees

Life Cycle

Most conifers – cone-bearing plants – are trees. All are wind pollinated rather than relying on animals such as insects to pollinate flowers. Male cones release pollen that is carried on the wind to female cones. After pollination, seeds develop in the female cones. When mature they drop out of the cones onto the ground. These seeds germinate and the seedlings grow into more trees.

Adaptations

Conifers have several adaptations that help them survive in harsh conditions:

- Most are evergreen: they keep their leaves all year round. This saves nutrients that would be lost when leaves are shed.
- The leaves are either thin and needle-like or small and scale-like. Their small surface area helps reduce water loss so the trees don't need as much water to grow.
- Needles are also covered with a protective, waxy coating that slows water loss.
- Leaves are often dark green in colour, which may help absorb energy from weak sunshine or in shady places.
- Needles taste bad to many animals, protecting the trees from getting eaten.

Englefield Conifers

Around the Englefield Estate there are different species of conifer – but what are they, and what are they used for?

Scots Pines are native to the UK. They are an important tree for making fencing and wood pulp, which is used to make paper.

Douglas Firs come from North America. Their wood is used for construction and wooden flooring because it is durable.

Corsican Pines originally come from the island of Corsica and are resistant to drought. Their wood is used for construction and paper manufacture.

Larch is a deciduous conifer, which means it loses its needles in winter. The timber is used for construction and is durable for outside use such as cladding.