Photographing trees for identification

When taking photographs of trees it is important to take close up shots of the bark, leaves, branches and any fruits or flowers. Any unique or unusual feature you notice can help to zero in on the species.

Leaves may be the most important characteristic when it comes to identifying trees; they have a wide range of characteristics such as structure, complexity, shape, venation, surface, smell, taste, and arrangement on the branch.

The bark of a tree is a good characteristic to examine as it is always accessible and easily observed. When looking at the bark, consider the texture and color of the bark, how thick it might be, the shape and color of the bark flakes, any bumps or spines and the size of the cracks.

Some trees have large showy flowers while others have small or no flowers at all. Since flowers are not always present, they should be used in conjuncture with other characteristics to identify a tree type.

When examining twigs it is best to look at recent growth as older branches may have lost some of their key differentiating features. These key features are buds, scars, holes of varying size and shape, and thorns.

Finally back up and get a picture of the entire tree. Now you have documented enough of the tree to be able to get it identified!

If the tree you are trying to identify has fruits this can be a great way to identify the tree. Often, fruits will have fallen off the tree and you will be able to closely examine them. Just make sure the fruit you picked up off the ground belongs to the tree you are interested in.