Name:_____

Date:_____

Tree Identification

The scientific study of trees is called **dendrology**. Trees and plants are identified by many characteristics including bark, flowers, fruits and seeds, buds, and twig traits. One of the easiest ways to identify a tree is by examining its leaves. By identifying leaf type and leaf arrangement you can determine the species of most trees.

First, the leaf is determined to be simple or compound. Trees with **simple** leaves have one blade attached to a stalk or branch, while trees that have multiple leaflets attached to a single stalk or twig are said to have **compound** leaves.

Step #1- Simple leaf: OR Compound leaf:

(go to step #2)

(go to step #4)

If the leaf is simple, it is determined whether its edges are lobed or unlobed. **Lobed** leaves have major projections, called lobes, which make up the shape of the leaf. If the leaf is **unlobed**, it is said to have a consistent leaf edge.

Step #2- Simple Lobed leaf: OR Simple Unlobed leaf:

(go to step #3)

(go to step #3)

Lobed leaves are either palmately lobed or pinnately lobed. **Palmately** lobed leaves have veins that radiate out from the center, like fingers on a hand, while **pinnately** lobed leaves have veins that come out from several regions along the main vein. Unlobed leaves are characterized as having **smooth** edges or rough edges with **teeth**.

Step #3-

Palmately lobed: Pinnately lobed: Smooth, unlobed: Toothed, unlobed:

Middle School

*Drawings courtesy of <http://forestry.about.com/cs/treeid/a/100_trees_id.htm>