

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE #90



Tamarack Tree

Deciduous Conifer Tree

“TO FALL OFF”

Tamarack are very special trees. They belong to the Pinaceae family with other pine trees, and they make cones. But unlike most pine trees, they shed their needles (a special type of leaf) in the fall.

We call trees that shed their leaves “deciduous” which means “to fall off.” Tamarack is a “deciduous conifer,” because it is a tree that makes pine cones, but its leaves (needles) fall off each year.



HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT YOUR EYES WERE PLAYING TRICKS ON YOU?

This past weekend I was traveling in northern Minnesota, which is very different from where I live in Colorado. It is wetter and has more leafy trees. I looked out the window as we drove, and something seemed strange. I wondered if my eyes were playing a trick on me. There was a beautiful forest of pine trees, but it was not green. The trees were golden yellow!



Summer



Fall



Winter

I had heard that tamarack trees are unique among pine trees because they lose their pine needles in the winter. But I did not know that just like a leafy tree, a tamarack’s pine needles turn from green to bright yellow before falling off. Along our drive, we saw many golden forests of tamarack trees preparing to go dormant for winter and take a long nap, resting before they regrow new needles in spring. I took the photo on the bottom left of a small creek running through a golden forest.

Deciduous trees like leafy trees and tamarack shed their leaves in fall to get ready to rest. A leaf’s job is to soak in sunlight the tree then uses to make food and grow. During winter, a tree doesn’t need to do that. Leaves can get in the way of its rest. The best thing for a deciduous tree to keep growing is to yearly shed its leaves. The Bible says we too need to shed things to grow. Hebrews 12:1 says, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” We can shed anything holding us back so we can keep growing in God’s goodness and truth.