

Deciduous Forests



What is a deciduous forest?

A forest that is dominated by trees that lose their leaves in the fall is called a deciduous forest. Wyoming deciduous tree species include aspen, cottonwood, box elder, ash, mountain ash, poplars, willows, fruit trees such as the wild plum and less commonly oak and maple. Deciduous forests are often called "hardwood" forests.

Why are deciduous forests important?

Deciduous forests are most important as habitat areas. Many wildlife species rely on deciduous forests and trees as their primary sources of food and shelter. In Wyoming, most deciduous trees grow close to streams, rivers, or in moist areas. Their root systems help keep the soil from eroding and being washed away. Deciduous forests are also pleasing to our human senses, especially in the fall when their leaves turn yellow, orange, and red. They give us a place to enjoy the outdoors and observe nature. Unlike some coniferous forests in Wyoming, deciduous forests are not harvested on a commercially large scale.

Where are deciduous forests in Wyoming?

Near and along river and stream courses, adjacent to meadows and wetlands, in sheltered valleys and on moist north-facing slopes, and in mountainous areas where there is regular precipitation or adequate runoff. Deciduous trees are very dependent on water.

Deciduous Forest Ecosystem Flashcards

Bobcat



Red Fox



White-tailed Deer



Striped Skunk



Masked Shrew



Big Brown Bat



Deciduous Forest Ecosystem Flashcards

White-breasted Nuthatch



Wild Turkey



Bullocks Oriole



Great Horned Owl



Northern Goshawk



Millipede



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Quaking Aspen



Green Ash



Wild Strawberry



Sticky Geranium



The Sun



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Bobcat

Name: Bobcat
Scientific Name: *Lynx rufus*
Predators: Mountain lion, raptors
Prey or Food: Rabbits, small mammals

Did you know? It is rare to see these cats because they are "nocturnal," meaning active at night.

Red Fox

Name: Red Fox
Scientific Name: *Vulpes vulpes*
Predators: Raptors, mountain lions, bobcats
Prey or Food: Rodents, birds, seeds, fruits

Did you know? Fox will leap into the air and pounce on their prey.

White-tailed Deer

Name: White-tailed Deer
Scientific Name: *Odocoileus virginianus*
Predators: Humans, Mountain lions, wolves (adults), bobcat, coyotes, raptors (young)
Prey or Food: Plants, seeds, nuts, fruits

Did you know? This deer uses its tail as an alert to "flag" danger, serving as a warning sign to other deer near it.

Striped Skunk

Name: Striped Skunk
Scientific Name: *Mephitis mephitis*
Predators: Raptors
Prey or Food: Small mammals, eggs, insects, fruits

Did you know? The skunk's repellent odor or "musk" is also irritating to skin and eyes.

Masked Shrew

Name: Masked Shrew
Scientific Name: *Sorex cinereus*
Predators: Raptors, bobcats, fox
Prey or Food: Insects

Did you know? Shrews don't have a cheekbone, making it easier to root around the forest floor for insects.

Big Brown Bat

Name: Big Brown Bat
Scientific Name: *Eptesicus fuscus*
Predators: Owls
Prey or Food: Beetles, moths, other insects

Did you know? Bat's wings are actually double layers of skin stretched across modified hand bones; this allows them excellent maneuverability.

White-breasted Nuthatch

Name: White-breasted Nuthatch
Scientific Name: *Sitta carolinensis*
Predators: Raptors, mammals, snakes
Prey or Food: Insects in spring and summer, seeds in fall and winter

Did you know? Nuthatches use their slightly upcurved beaks to seek insects beneath tree bark.

Wild Turkey

Name: Wild Turkey
Scientific Name: *Meleagris gallopavo*
Predators: Coyotes, bobcats, raptors, snakes
Prey or Food: Seeds, nuts, insects

Did you know? At dusk turkeys will fly up to the limbs of trees to roost, usually in small groups.

Bullocks Oriole

Name: Bullocks Oriole
Scientific Name: *Icterus bullockii*
Predators: Larger birds and mammals prey on eggs, raptors prey on adults
Prey or Food: Fruit, nectar, insects, spiders

Did you know? These colorful birds build a pendant-shaped nest that hangs from branches.

Great Horned Owl

Name: Great Horned Owl
Scientific Name: *Bubo virginianus*
Predators: Raptors, snakes
Prey or Food: Mammals (including skunks), birds, bats

Did you know? The "horns" on this owl are actually feathered tufts used for communication and camouflage.

Northern Goshawk

Name: Northern Goshawk
Scientific Name: *Accipiter gentilis*
Predators: Bobcats, snakes, black bears, other raptors (mainly young & eggs)
Prey or Food: Birds, rodents, other small mammals

Did you know? This raptor is a fierce predator with speedy maneuverability through dense forest.

Millipede

Name: Millipede
Scientific Name: *Diplopodia* class
Predators: Birds, mammals, bats
Prey or Food: Decomposing matter

Did you know? Although their name means "thousand feet," they often have less than 200.

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Quaking Aspen

Name: Quaking Aspen
Scientific Name: *Populus tremuloides*
Predators: Mammals, birds
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? Aspens can form huge colonies of clones that grow up from their roots.

Green Ash

Name: Green Ash
Scientific Name: *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
Predators: Mammals, birds
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This tree turns golden yellow in the fall.

Wild Strawberry

Name: Wild Strawberry
Scientific Name: *Fragaria virginiana*
Predators: Mammals, birds, insects
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? Although smaller than those found in stores, these fruits are much sweeter.

Sticky Geranium

Name: Sticky Geranium
Scientific Name: *Geranium viscosissimum*
Predators: Mammals, birds
Prey or Food: Water, sun, soil, air

Did you know? This plant's seeds are carried in pods that resemble stork bills.

The Sun

Plants use the sun's energy to grow through a process known as photosynthesis. Because plants are the beginning of all food chains, all plants and animals transfer the sun's energy when they eat.