

January 14, 2016



### *Distinctive Leaf Buds*



I once read that oak trees (*Quercus spp.*) have a cluster of buds at their branch tips. That's how you can identify an oak when there are no leaves on the tree.

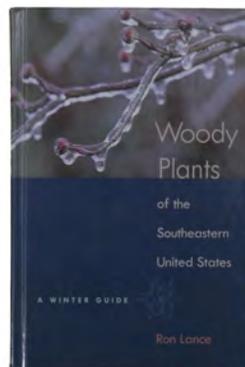
Another tree which is easy to identify during winter is the Yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). Its leaf buds have a distinctive spatulate shape with two bud scales covering the tissue which will become leaves in the spring.



One of the best ways to learn to identify a tree through knowing its leaf bud shape and position along a branch, is to first know your tree in the summer. Watch that same tree as it grows new leaf buds in the fall and drops the current year's leaves. Then when it's the winter season, you can study the leaf buds for your pre-identified tree, which will subsequently enable you to identify other similar trees during winter.

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## *Tree ID in Winter*



An excellent resource for identifying trees and other woody plants during winter is the field guide Woody Plants of the Southeastern United States by Ron Lance. It is subtitled "A Winter Guide." This field guide contains a dichotomous key which uses the plant's winter characteristics such as the bark, the leaf buds, possible flower buds, bud scales with bundle scars, dried seed cases and pith. It's a bit different terminology than most people are familiar with. However, it is easy to learn with the information provided within the initial pages of the book.

## *Mystery Plant Confirmed*



Jacob G. was the first to correctly identify [Mystery Plant 083](#) as Eastern shooting star (*Primula meadia*), formerly known as *Dodecatheon meadia*. This wildflower has an attractive, intriguing shape.

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## *Mystery Plant*

What is the name of this plant? ([There are more images on the website.](#))





When you can identify this plant, provide your response at [IdentifyThatPlant.com](https://www.identifythatplant.com) as a comment for the blog entry called [Mystery Plant 084](#). Please identify the plant by both its common name and its scientific name. The answer will be confirmed in the next newsletter.

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*Confidently master the skill of correct plant identification*

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