I am Douglas Fir

I live in the forests of the Pacific Northwest.
I can grow 200 to 300 feet tall.
And I can live for 500 to 1000 years.

Photo by Heidi Bohan
©Starflower Foundation 2006
When I am mature my bark becomes thick and furrowed. The deep cracks in my bark make a good place for little brown bats to sleep for a day. Woodpeckers like to make holes in my bark as they dig for insects to eat.
My leaves are called needles and stay on all year. In spring I grow new leaves that are very soft and sweet smelling.

You know that I am Douglas fir if you look at the end of my branches and it looks like a bottlebrush. You can also see little brown buds growing at the tip.
My cones are very special, and don’t look like any other cone in the forest. They hold winged seeds underneath their scales that fly into the air and travel far, looking for a new place to grow. My seeds are a favorite food of Douglas Squirrel, and many birds.
When my seeds fall to earth they can sprout into a tiny Douglas fir seedling.
When I get very old I will eventually stop growing and die. But my trunk lives on as a snag that becomes home to many animals, large and small, that make their home in my cavities.

After many years my old trunk falls to earth and becomes a nurse log. My decaying wood becomes home to the many plants and little animals of the forest.
A favorite place for my baby seedlings to grow is on top of a warm and moist nurse log.

And, if those seedlings are very lucky, they may someday grow into an old growth Douglas fir tree, like me.