



## Identifying Squirreled Cones

**Squirrels** eat cones from the bottom up. They hold the cone with one paw and pull the scales off with their teeth, they may a finger to flick the seed into their mouth. As a result, a bit of the scale is left on the cone, giving the eaten cone a slightly 'feathered' appearance. If the squirrel is eating the cones in a tree, the cones can be dropped over a wide area. Sometimes squirrels like to sit on a tree stump or feeding post and you will find a lot of eaten cones and scales around this post.

**Mice** gnaw each scale off the cone and then eat the seed. This leaves a very neat eaten cone. Mice often take cones to one location to eat (often one that is partly hidden) so you may find a lot of moused cones in the one place.

**Woodpeckers** peck at cones, pecking out the seeds. Woodpeckered cones are quite messy to look at, with some scales taken out and some left.

Use a Tree Identification Guide to help you identify the tree species. The Field Studies Council 'Tree Name Trail' is easy to use.

Figure 1: Comparing Moused and Squirreled Cones

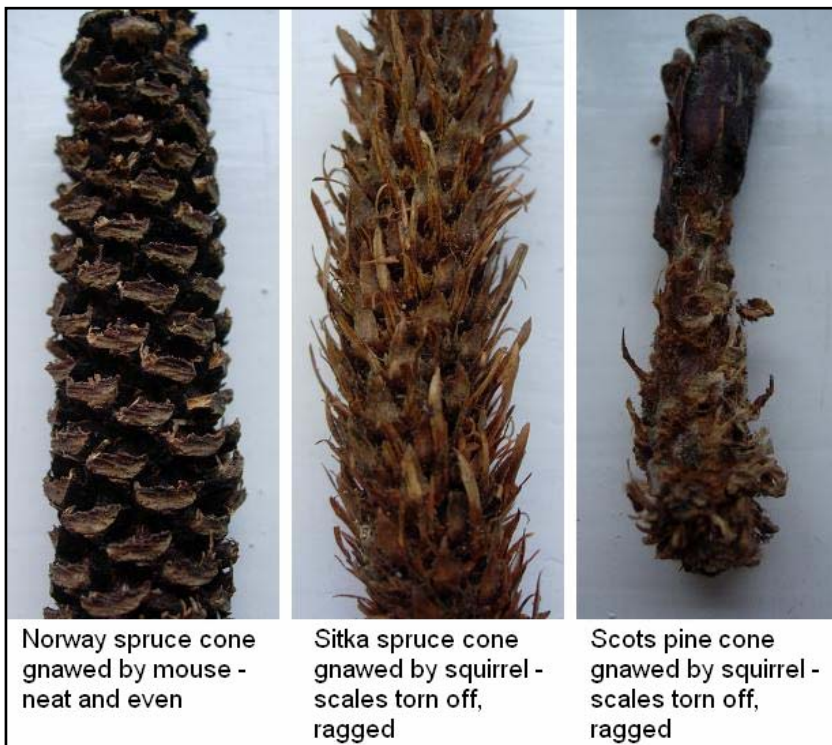


Figure 2: Whole and Squirreled Sitka Spruce cones



Figure 3. Woodpeckered Scots Pine



Figure 4. Whole and Squirreled Scots Pine

Figure 5. Whole and Squirreled Larch

