

The three main parts of trees include the root, stem, and leaves; they are integral parts of the vascular system which interconnects all the living cells. In trees and other plants that develop wood, the vascular cambium allows the expansion of vascular tissue that produces woody growth. Because this growth ruptures the epidermis of the stem, woody plants also have a cork cambium that develops among the phloem. The cork cambium gives rise to thickened cork cells to protect the surface of the plant and reduce water loss. Both the production of wood and the production of cork are forms of secondary growth. Trees are either evergreen, having foliage that persists and remains green throughout the year, or deciduous, shedding their leaves at the end of the growing season and then having a dormant period without foliage. Most conifers are evergreens, but larches (*Larix* and *Pseudolarix*) are deciduous, dropping their needles each autumn, and some species of cypress (*Glyptostrobus*, *Metasequoia* and *Taxodium*) shed small leafy shoots annually in a process known as cladoptosis. The crown is the spreading top of a tree including the branches and leaves, while the uppermost layer in a forest, formed by the crowns of the trees, is known as the canopy.