Dichotomous Key

Field Biology

Using the tree-branching diagram that you created, you will now create your own individual dichotomous plant key. A dichotomous key uses a series of questions to successively divide a group of plants (or other organisms) into two sub-groups until a particular species is identified. **You may use your own completed, typed dichotomous key on the plant test!**

Here is how to turn your tree-branching diagram into a dichotomous key. **You have to create your own dichotomous key.** You will not be allowed to use anyone else's key, or any photocopies, on the test.

1. Number all of the questions on your tree-branching diagram, from left to right, top to bottom.
2. Put the letters "a" and "b" above all of the arrows on your tree-branching diagram.
3. In Microsoft Word, type the questions on your tree-branching diagram in order.
4. Below each question, type "a", "b", and the corresponding answer to each letter.
5. After each answer, your dichotomous key should direct you to either another question or the name of a plant.
6. Once you get to the individual species in your dichotomous key, **include both the common and scientific name**
7. Scientific names are always written in italics, with the first word upper case and the second word lower case (for example: *Elymus glaucus*)
8. Your key should be neatly typed and represent your own work.

Here is an example of a dichotomous key:

1. Is the specimen larger than a pencil?
   a. The specimen is not larger than a pencil……go to 2
   b. The specimen is not larger than a pencil……go to 4

2. How many legs does the specimen have?
   a. The specimen has 2 or fewer legs……*Flying dino*
   b. The specimen has more than 2 legs……go to 3

3. Is the specimen all brown?
   a. The specimen is all brown……*Brown dino*
   b. The specimen is not all brown……*Green-brown dino*

4. Does the specimen have gills?
   a. The specimen has gills……go to 5
   b. The specimen does not have gills……*Turtle dino*

5. Where are the specimen's eyes?
   a. Both eyes are on one side of its head……*Flounder fish*
   b. The eyes are on different sides of its head……*Perch fish*