Leaf Identification Key*

1a. Leaves are needle-like or scale-like ..... go to #2
1b. Leaves not like above; leaves have a flat and wide blade ..... (skip #2) go to #3

2a. Leaves small, close together and overlapping like fish scales ..... **red cedar**
2b. Leaves long and narrow, needle-like ..... **Scotch pine**

3a. Leaves opposite 4
3b. Leaves alternate 5

4a. Leaves simple with 5 lobes; somewhat star-shaped ..... **silver maple**
4b. Leaves compound, 5-7 leaflets ..... **ash**

5a. Leaves simple 6
5b. Leaves compound 12

6a. Leaves lobed, maybe toothed or untoothed 7
6b. Leaves unlobed, maybe toothed or untoothed 8

7a. Lobes are rounded; one main vein in center with smaller side veins off the side ..... **bur oak**
7b. Lobes pointed; three equal-sized veins at the base leading to individual lobes ..... **sycamore**

8a. Leaf edge (margin) is smooth; not toothed in any way 9
8b. Leaf edge has large or small teeth 10

9a. Leaves are egg-shaped with a narrow pointed tip ..... **osage orange**
9b. Leaves are heart-shaped ..... **redbud**

10a. Leaf with asymmetrical base; edge appears to have larger and smaller teeth ..... **American elm**
10b. Leaf base symmetrical, no double-teeth present 11

11a. Leaf edge has rounded teeth; wider than long; triangular in outline ..... **cottonwood**
11b. Leaf edge finely toothed; longer than wide; sword-shaped ..... **black willow**

12a. Leaf once-compound (only one main leaf stalk); leaflet toothed and pointed ..... **black walnut**
12b. Leaf twice-compound; leaflets small, smooth and blunt-tipped ..... **honey locust**

*Key only works with LEAF IDENTIFICATION KIT™ from Youngs Naturalist Company, 1900 N. Main, Newton, KS 67114 (phone: 316.283.4103)

A similar key could be created for plants around your school: 1) collect different leaves; 2) do a dichotomous leaf sort; 3) describe the features that you used to separate each dichotomous pairing (e.g. simple vs. compound); 4) write these paired features in numerical order (like above)