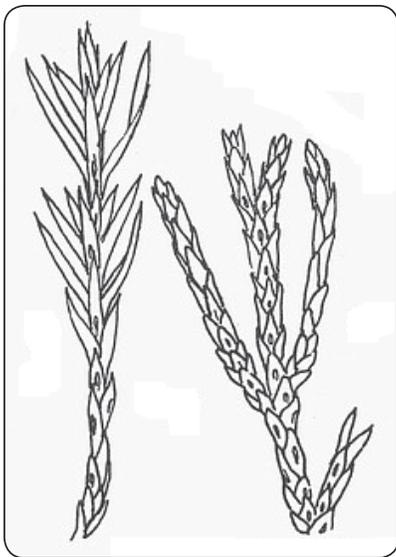


## Mystery Photo 4

To find the trees shown in the photo, head over to the pedestrian bridge that crosses Lincoln Creek on the north end of the property. Look on the east side of the creek, near a wooden bench. The trees in this family are redcedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), but names can be deceiving. Redcedars are green trees with brown bark and blue berries. You would have to cut the trees down to see red—deep, purplish red—in the heartwood of the trees. But don't do that! These trees are an important part of the landscape at Havenwoods.

Redcedars are tough little trees. They are one of the first trees that can grow in abandoned crop fields and heavily disturbed areas. And, while some might consider redcedars a "weed" tree, we are happy to see them growing in this area, which used to be infested with buckthorn.

Take a close look at the mother tree and her children, and you will notice that they have two types of leaves. The young leaves are sharp-pointed and needle-like. They grow mainly on the young trees and on shaded branches of older trees. The older leaves are scale-like and pressed tightly to the twig.



Now look for the fruit. The blue berry-like fruits are actually highly modified cones containing seeds. (Yes, redcedars are related to pines, spruces, and other conifers.) Since redcedars don't spread by growing suckers, the baby trees must have grown from seeds. The berries could have

just fallen from our mother tree or been blown a short distance by the wind, but more likely they were eaten by birds or mammals. From late summer into winter, flocks of cedar waxwings engulf these trees. In 12 minutes, a redcedar



seed can pass through the digestive system of a cedar waxwing and fall to the ground. After its trip through the gut of a cedar waxwing, the seed is three times more likely to sprout than a seed that simply fell to the ground!

Robins, mockingbirds, bluebirds, wild turkeys, goldfinches, flickers, and grosbeaks all eat redcedar berries, as do a long list of mammals, such as voles, rabbits, foxes, raccoons, skunks, opossums, coyotes, and deer. While the berries are popular, the prickly leaves are not. Because most animals avoid eating the foliage, redcedars provide refuges where wildlife can hide, rest, and nest.

This mother tree could live for 200 to 300 years—offering food and shelter for wildlife. Someday, her children will also begin to produce berries and have children of their own. Come back in a few years to see how this little family of trees is growing!