

Name \_\_\_\_\_



# The Oldest Tree in the World

The oldest tree in the world is the Great Basin Bristlecone Pine. Scientists used a tool called an increment borer to drill into the center of one of these trees and pull out a very thin cylinder of its trunk. They were then able to examine this cylinder, count the tree's rings, and accurately determine it to be over 5,000 years old. This species of tree lives in harsh climates where the temperature is very cold and winds can be extreme. Because of these conditions, the Bristlecone Pine grows very, very slowly, which means that its wood is far denser than that of most trees. The density of its wood protects it against the things that typically kill other trees, such as insects, fungi, rot, and erosion. It is also hardly ever subject to wildfires, since it lives in areas where the lack of vegetation make wildfires unlikely or impossible. The Bristlecone Pine can grow up to 50 feet high. Its trunk can get as big around as 154 inches. The needles on these pine trees can sometimes live up to 30 years, and it takes two years for a pine cone to reach maturity, much longer than in a typical conifer.

1. What species of tree is the oldest in the world?
2. What do scientists use an increment borer for?
3. How old is the oldest tree in the world?
4. In what kind of climate does the oldest species of tree live?
5. Why does this species of tree live so long??