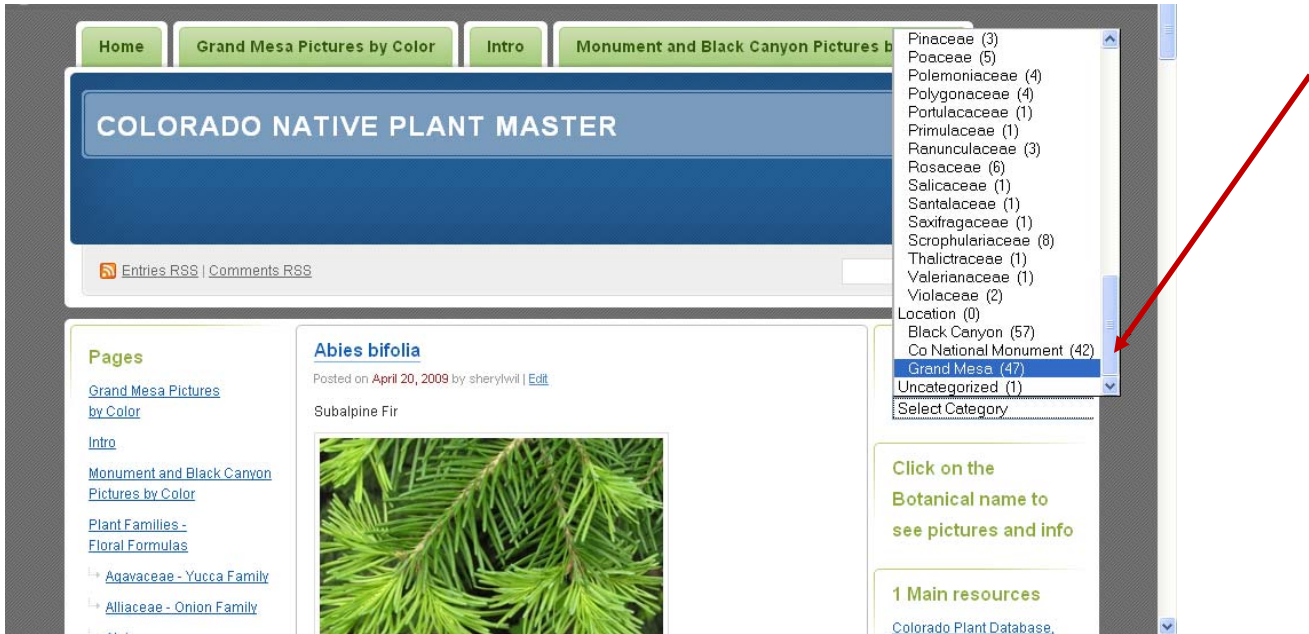
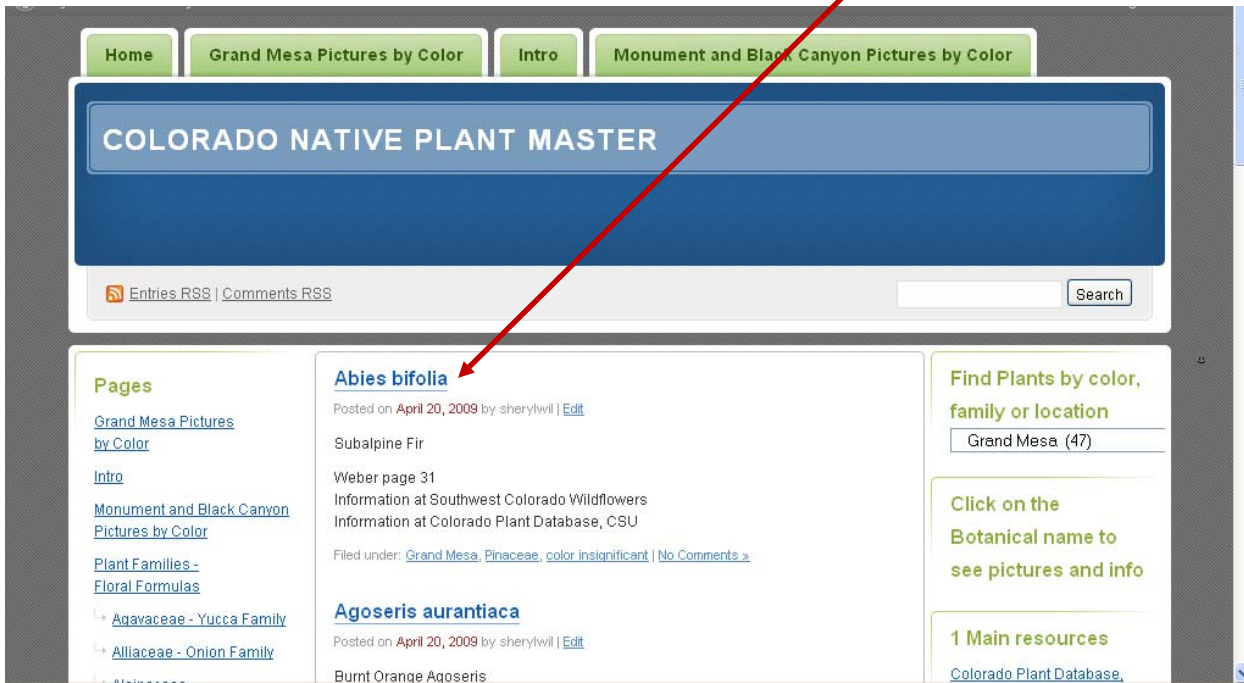


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**Abies bifolia**

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Subalpine Fir



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Southwest Colorado Wildflowers, *Abies lasiocarpa* · Mozilla Firefox

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**Abies bifolia.** Synonym: *Abies lasiocarpa*. (Subalpine Fir) Pinaceae (Pine Family)

Montane, subalpine, alpine. Woodlands. Spring. Lizard Head Trail, June 9, 2006.

Thin, silvery-gray bark and flat smooth needles distinguish the Subalpine Fir. A longitudinal crease runs the length of the needle, and, as is true for all firs, cones project upward from the top side of branches. (Pine and Spruce cones dangle downward from the bottom side of branches.) The tree grows to over 100 feet tall, and, like Engelmann Spruce, it is contorted and dwarfed as Krummholz (German for "crooked wood") at timberline. Along with Engelmann Spruce, Subalpine Fir dominates subalpine forests. The pictured tree is a giant at four feet in diameter.

"Abies" is the classical Latin name.

This tree was first described by Andrew Murray (1812-1876) in 1863 from a specimen collected in New Mexico by Benito Roehl (1824-1885).

There has been (and continues to be) disagreement about the name of this tree. Weber at first called it *Abies lasiocarpa*, which is the name that Utah Flora and Intermountain Flora still give it. Weber, Flora of North America, and Synthesis now call this tree *Abies bifolia*. Weber and ENA indicate that *A. lasiocarpa* is found only in the Pacific coast states. *Abies*

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**Abies bifolia**

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Subalpine Fir



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- [Colorado Native Plant](#)

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**Plant Detail**  
**SUBALPINE FIR - *Abies bifolia***

**IDENTIFICATION**

**Common Name:** SUBALPINE FIR  
**Family:** Pine - Pinaceae  
**Scientific Name:** *Abies bifolia*  
**Key Characteristics:** bark not strongly checkered, relatively thin and not spongy under hand pressure; male cones cylindrical, to 0.75 inch long and dark blue; female cones are dark purple to 4 inches long, with awl-tipped bracts (small leaf-like structures).

**Leaf Type:** needle  
**Mature Height:** to 100 feet.  
**Habitat:** north-facing slopes and moist cool sites along streams.

**ECOLOGY**

**Growth Form:** tree  
**Angio/Gymnosperm:** gymnosperm (plant with naked seed as in conifers).  
**Life Zone:** montane/subalpine.

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