

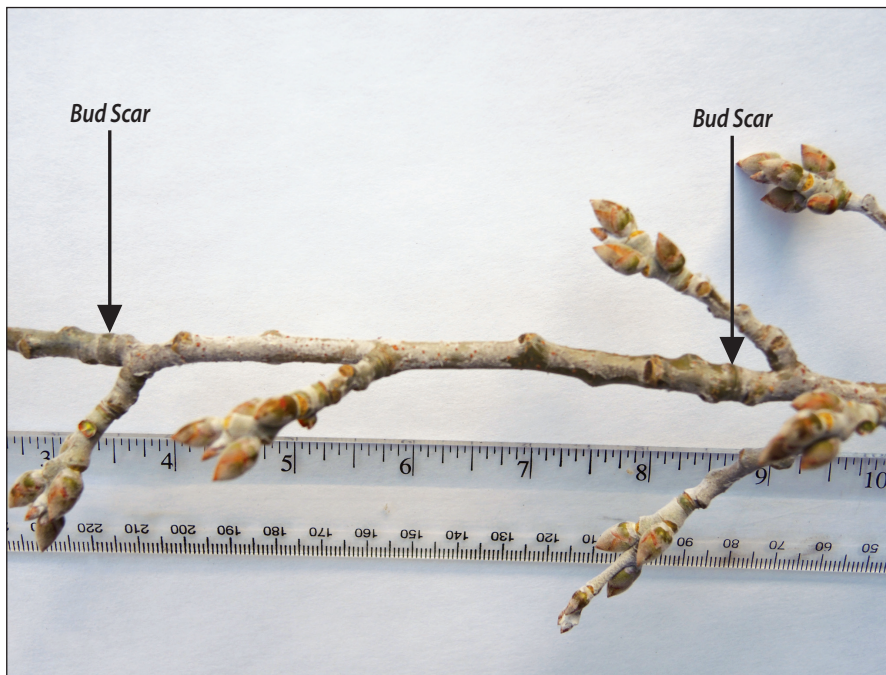
# Bud Scars

There is a quick infallible method to gauge the progress of your tree's growth and its overall health. That is by recognizing the natural divisions between the growths of a series of years. This is represented on the branches by the bud scars and the length of growth in between them, called the shoot extension.

Take hold of the end of any branch, depending on the time of year. The bud you find at the terminus will either be complete with bud caps and ready for winter or, if you look some earlier time during the growing season, you will see a bud still forming. The finished bud is a complex group of tissues and takes all growing season to complete. These are next year's buds; when spring finally arrives, the tree is already prepared to leaf out. As the year's growth proceeds, the shoot extends in the tissue behind the bud in either one or two growth flushes to complete the year's growth.

Look at the bud again; at the bottom of the bud you will find a small ring of wrinkled tissue all the way around the base of the bud. This tissue is called a bud scar. It is permanent and stays in the same place around the branch through subsequent years of growth until the increasingly rough bark hides the ring of the bud scar.

So starting from the terminal bud proceed back toward the trunk. At first you are still in the current year's growth, but soon enough you will find a bud scar. Shoot



Poplar twig showing bud scars

extension is an accurate indication of how much that branch grows each year. If the tree you are inspecting is a Swedish aspen you may have to move back toward the trunk as much as a metre (three feet) to find the bud scar that marks the break between this year's and last year's growth.

Three year old branch

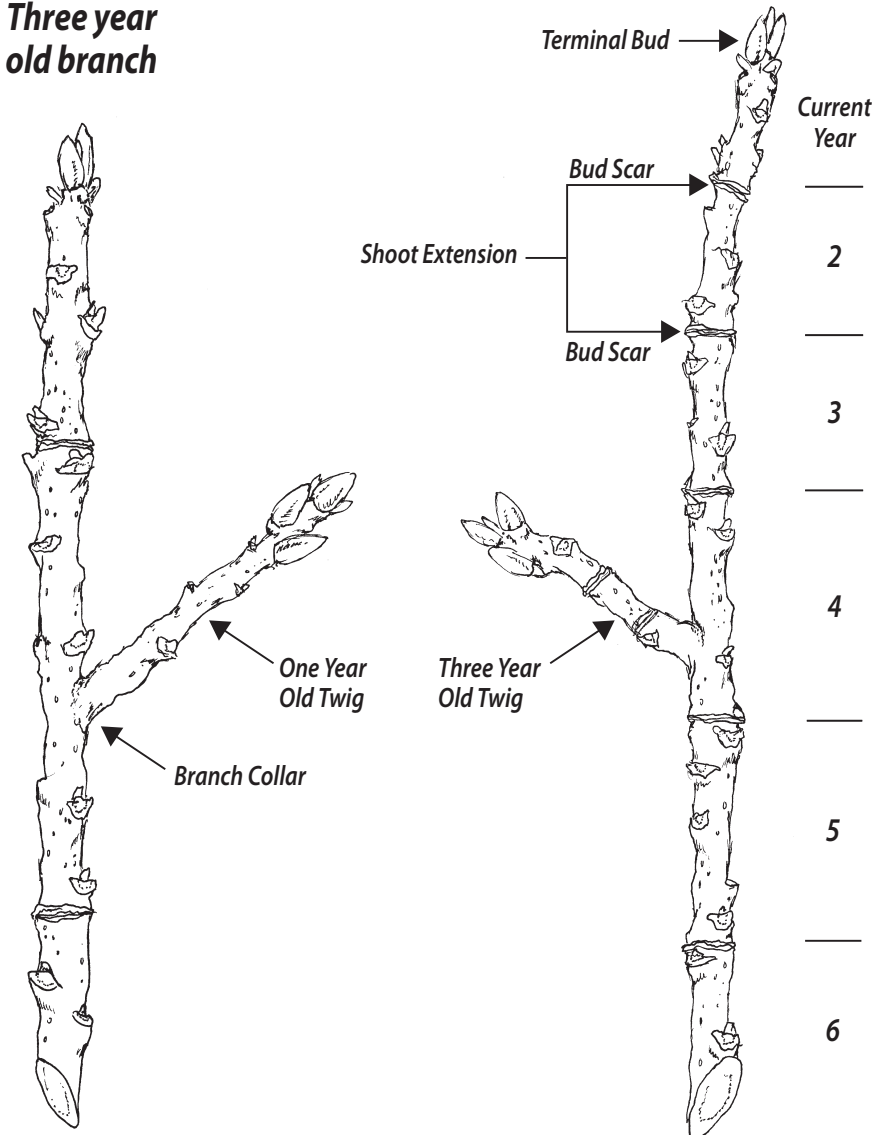


Illustration: Sylvain Joly