



deciduous and evergreen leaves

First of all, leaves A and B have pretty much the same structure, right?

Wrong. **Leaf A** is the *pinnately compound leaf* of Hercules-Club, *Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*, bearing seven leaflets, while "**Leaf**" **B** is actually a stem from a Privet Bush, *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, bearing about 20 *simple* (undivided) leaves. I know that each of the Privet's green things is a leaf because at the base of each leaf's petiole there is a bud harboring next spring's leaf, and you'd never find a bud at the base of a leaflet, which is just a part of a leaf.

Now for something easier: **Leaf C** is just a normal *simple* leaf ("simple" is the proper way to refer to a leaf that is not compound, or separated into distinct leaflets). It's the 5-lobed leaf of the Sweetgum tree, *Liquidambar styraciflua*.

Leaf D is another *compound* leaf, but it's compound in a special kind. When compound leaves just have three leaflets, there's a special name for it. They are *trifoliate* leaves. This is the trifoliate leaf of a weed called Tick-Trefoil, *Desmodium* sp.

Leaf E has five leaflets, but notice that its leaflets are arranged much different from the seven leaflets on Leaf A. In Leaf A, the leaflets arise from a *rachis*, which is the continuation of the leaf's *petiole* -- the stem-like thing attaching the leaf to the twig. However, in Leaf E there is no rachis. The five leaflets all come together in one place. They are held like the fingers, or digits, on a hand. Therefore, we say that this special kind of compound leaf where all the leaflets arise in one spot are *digitally compound*. Leaf E is the *digitally compound* leaf of a Dewberry, *Rubus* sp.

Leaf F is the trifoliate compound leaf of the herb known in both English and Latin as Oxalis.

Leaf G is a compound leaf in which the lower leaflet sections are themselves divided into leaflets. Leaves with leaflets that are themselves divided are referred to as being *bipinnately compound*. There are even tripinnately compound leaves, but I couldn't find any during my walk. Leaf G is the *bipinnately compound* leaf of the Pepper-Vine, *Ampelopsis arborea*.