Evergreen, mostly monoecious trees or shrubs with resin ducts. Buds naked. Leaves opposite or in whorls of 3-4, frequently dimorphic: the juvenile ones larger, needle-like or subulate; adult leaves small, scale-like, rarely needle-like. Reproductive organs in small cones with opposite or ternately whorled scales. Staminate cones terminal or axillary, with 4-8 whorls of scales each with 2-6 pollen sacs (microsporangia) on the under-surface; pollen grains without air sacs. Ovulate cones terminal or lateral on short branches, scales usually few, each with 1 to many erect ovules on upper surface, sterile bract united with scale; mature cone mostly woody, sometimes fleshy and berry-like. Seeds sometimes narrowly winged; cotyledons 2, rarely 5-6.