

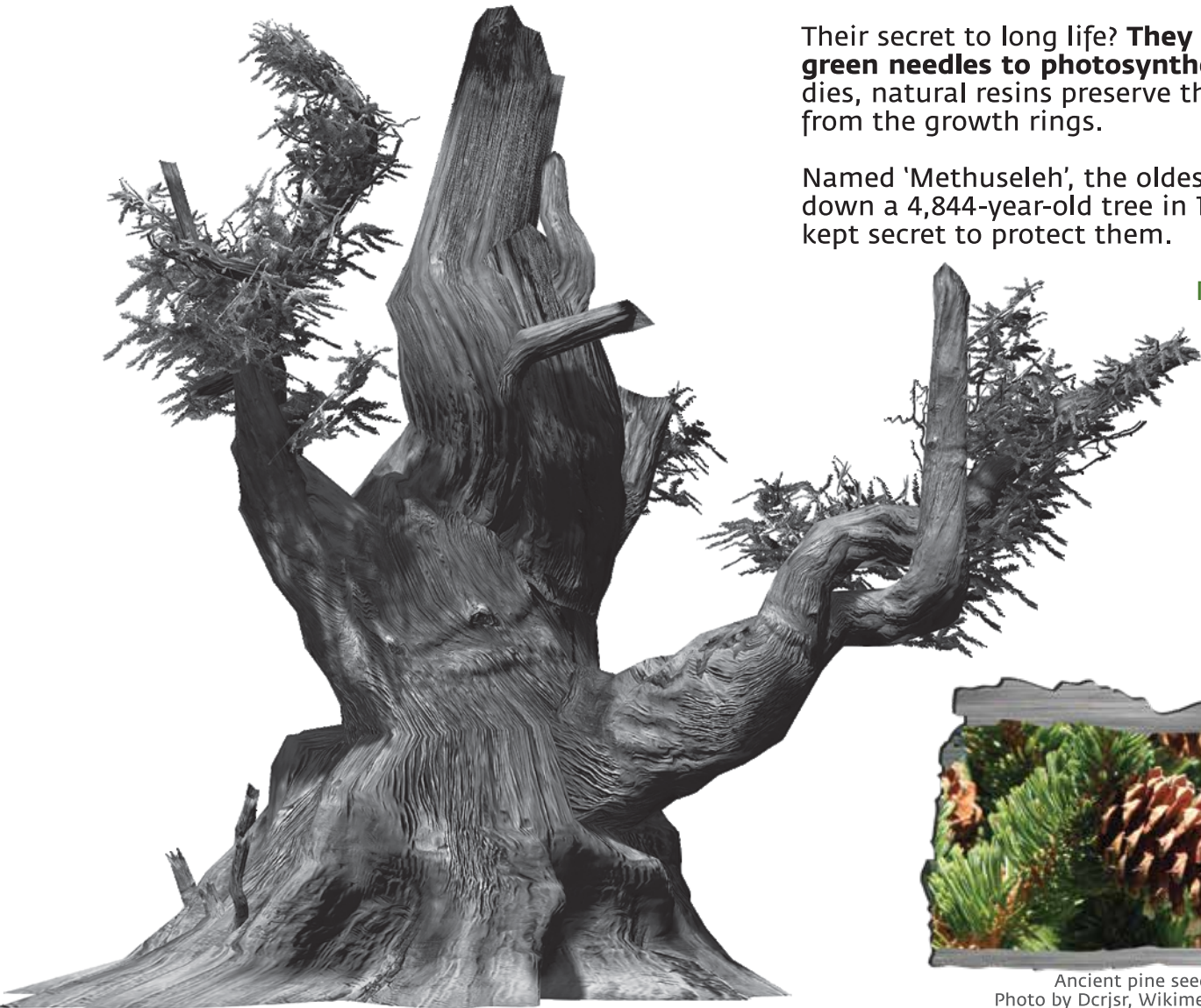
ANCIENT PINE

At over 4,800 years old, the ancient or Great Basin bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*) is the world's oldest living non-clonal organism! High atop California's White Mountains, these trees are twisted into alien-like forms over centuries by unforgiving winds, freezing winters, intense sunlight and parched soils.

Their secret to long life? **They slow down time by growing so slowly they only need a few living branches and green needles to photosynthesize**, even after most of the tree has died away. When the whole tree eventually dies, natural resins preserve the wood allowing scientists to learn about climate patterns over thousands of years from the growth rings.

Named 'Methuseleh', the oldest living ancient pine is an incredible 4,853 years old! After a forestry student cut down a 4,844-year-old tree in 1964, the world was outraged and now the locations of the oldest ancient pines are kept secret to protect them.

Pine Family – Pinaceae | Conservation status: Lower Risk



Ancient pine seed cones.
Photo by Dcrjsr, Wikimedia Commons.



4,000-year-old trees are protected in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, White Mountains, California.