



In general, a flower has 4 whorls, or rings, of structures. The outermost whorl is comprised of the sepals. Inside or above that will be a whorl of petals. Inside or above that will be the male stamen(s) and in the center will be the female pistil(s). Seeing what is missing or what is extra beyond these 4 whorls, may help us identify the plant or at least the plant family.

Ginkgo 'flowers' do not fit the description above because ginkgo is a gymnosperm, more closely related to conifers, than to flowering plants (angiosperms). The flower description above is for angiosperms. Ginkgo has separate male and female structures on different trees (dioecious).

Male 'flowers' are really sacs of pollen held on a cone-like strobilus (pollen cone). Here the pollen sacs have opened and shed their pollen.



Female 'flowers' are really a pair of ovules on a long stalk (arrows) in the cluster of emerging leaves.

