

## ***Tips for searching databases***

Boolean operators = ways to broaden and narrow your search

**AND** = narrows the search as it combines two or more concepts. Each must be present in the record for it to be retrieved

Example: *timber AND production*

both words must appear somewhere in the record in order to be retrieved

**OR** = broadens the search as either/any word queried needs to be present in order to be retrieved. Often used to find records with synonyms

Example: *pine OR pinus*

retrieves items that have either the common or scientific name (or both terms) in the record

**NOT** or **AND NOT** = will not retrieve records with these terms in it

Example: *spruce AND NOT white*

Use with CAUTION: this will exclude records where an author's last name is White.

Combining search strategies. Use the Boolean terms to combine concepts together. Will often need to add parenthesis to group the OR statements together (much like a math equation where  $(2+12)-(5+2)=7$  is different than  $2+12-5+2=11$ ).

Example: *(pine OR pinus) AND (spruce OR picea)*

The records retrieved can have either the common or scientific name for the species, but both species must be in the record in order to be retrieved

If you ran the search as *pine OR pinus AND spruce OR picea*, then "spruce" must appear in the record, at least one of the other terms pine, pinus, picea needs to be present in order to be retrieved