

# TREE I.D. HANDOUTS

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# AMERICAN BEECH *Fagus grandifolia*

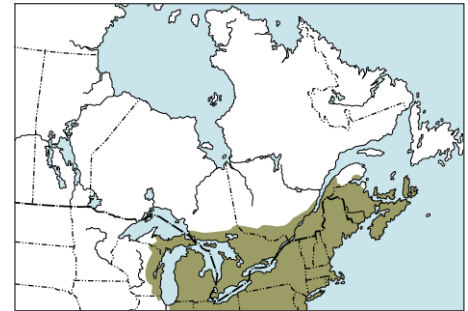
## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 100 cm
Age:	Up to 200 years
Bark:	Smooth light bluish-grey bark that darkens with age
Fruits:	Edible nuts, usually in pairs within a bristly husk opening into four parts, each nut a sharp 3-sided period
Leaves:	Its large oval leaves (6–14 cm long) are dark bluish-green on top and lighter beneath
Form:	Large rounded broad crown
Quick ID Tip:	Leaves with 9-14 straight parallel veins per side, each ending with a tooth



## Where It's Found

The American beech grows across southern and central Ontario, as far north as the north shore of Georgina Bay. It's a medium-sized tree that grows slowly but can live for 200 years or longer.



## Uses

Commonly used for charcoal and fuelwood. It is also harvested for rough timber, flooring, plywood, and railroad ties. American beech nuts are ground and used by Indigenous communities to treat headaches, epilepsy, and other conditions.



## Wildlife Values

The nuts are edible and a popular food source for many birds and mammals.

## Did You Know?

The distinctive triangular nuts are eaten by people as well as wildlife. Beech bark disease is currently threatening the species across its entire range.



# AMERICAN ELM

*Ulmus americana*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 35 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 175 cm
Age:	Up to 200 years
Bark:	Deeply furrowed
Seeds:	Oval, veined, fringed with hairs, otherwise hairless. Wings are deeply notched at the tip.
Leaves:	Upper surface dark green and rough to the touch, lower surface lighter green and hairy. Neatly toothed edges, oval shaped and have a very asymmetrical base.
Form:	
Quick ID Tip:	On the top half of the tree, the trunk divides in a few large upright limbs with many outwardly fanning branches. The crown is a graceful umbrella shape.



## Where It's Found

Population has seriously depleted due to Dutch Elm Disease, however some young-mid aged trees can still be found in southern and central Ontario.



## Uses

Commonly used for kitchenette furniture, flooring, baskets, and woodenware. The wood is both tough and flexible, which historically made it a common choice for hockey sticks! Indigenous uses include utilizing parts of the American elm tree to assist in the healing of various ailments ranging from broken bones to diarrhea and coughs.



## Wildlife Values

A number of small birds feed on the seeds. Mice squirrels and other small mammals feed on the flowers and flower buds.

## Did You Know?

Some isolated elm trees in North America have survived Dutch Elm Disease, with some survivors growing to be 4.5 m in circumference.



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# BALSAM FIR

*Abies balsamea*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 70 cm
Age:	Up to 150 years
Bark:	Covered in sap blisters (sap bubbles) especially when young
Seeds:	Barrel shaped, greyish brown, 4–10 cm long
Leaves:	Singular, attached directly to the tree (no papery stem like with hemlock)
Form:	Crown is triangular with a pointed tip. When the balsam fir grows in a group of other trees, the branches at the bottom of the tree die and dry out. When in the open, the tree gets more sunlight and the lower branches stay green all the way to the ground.
Quick ID Tip:	When removing a needle from the tree, there is no papery stem, meaning it is a fir not a hemlock. <i>Remember: hems have stems!</i>



## Where It's Found

The balsam fir grows in a variety of climates and temperatures and is found across Ontario.



## Uses

Construction lumber, paper (pulpwood) and plywood. Indigenous uses include making tea made from the balsam fir to treat coughs, soar throats, colds, flu, dysentery, and many other ailments.



## Wildlife Values

Significant food source for moose and deer especially in the winter.

## Did You Know?

Balsam firs are often used as Christmas trees because they have a wonderful scent, and the needles stay on the tree for a long time after it's been cut down.



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# BLACK SPRUCE

*Picea mariana*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 30 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 26 cm
Age:	Up to 200 years
Bark:	Dark and flaky
Seeds:	Cones are 2–3 cm long, oval, with a blunt tip
Leaves:	Dark green stiff four-sided needles, 1-2 cm long, blunt on the end
Form:	Trunk is tall and thin, branches exist from top to bottom, upper crown is very dense and often has a cluster of branches at the top
Quick ID Tip:	When the tree is young, the cones are a distinct purple colour



## Where It's Found

Found across Canada

## Uses

Oil from black spruce is used to aid in respiratory therapy, to soothe dry skin, and as an anti-inflammatory. Also used for structural lumber and pulp. Traditional Indigenous uses include fashioning fish nets from various parts of the black spruce.

## Wildlife Values

A source of food for a variety of animals including woodland caribou and squirrels.

## Did You Know?

Black spruce is the provincial tree of Newfoundland and Labrador.

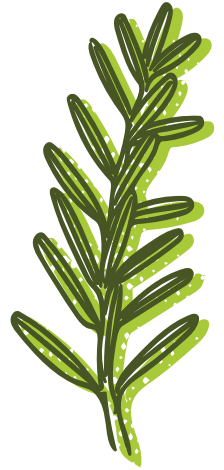


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# EASTERN HEMLOCK *Tsuga canadensis*

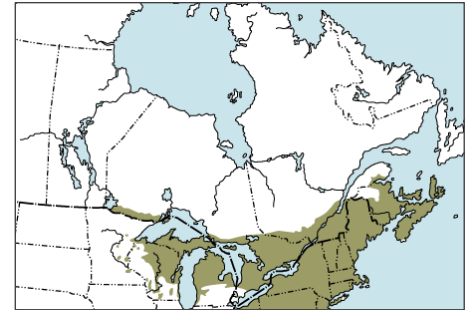
## How to ID

Height:	Up to 30 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 100 cm
Age:	Up to 600 years
Bark:	Scaly when young, deeply furrowed when old
Seeds:	Cones are 12 to 20 mm long, oval shaped
Leaves:	1 to 2 cm long, shiny green on top and paler underneath, flat
Form:	Conical, wide trunk that tapers into a thin tip
Quick ID Tip:	If there is a small papery stem when you pull a needle off a branch it's a hemlock not a fir! Remember: <i>hems have stems</i>



## Where It's Found

Southern Ontario, grows best in moist and cool areas and grows in a range of different soil types. The eastern hemlock is very shade tolerant, so it's ideal for planting in a spot that doesn't get much sun.



## Uses

Commonly used as construction timber. Indigenous uses include utilizing the inner bark, roots, and needles to treat colds, rheumatism, arthritis, and as antiseptics.



## Wildlife Values

In the winter, the dense crowns trap snow in the canopy creating open ground and shelter for deer. Their branches and seeds also provide food for other woodland animals (songbirds, porcupines, etc.).



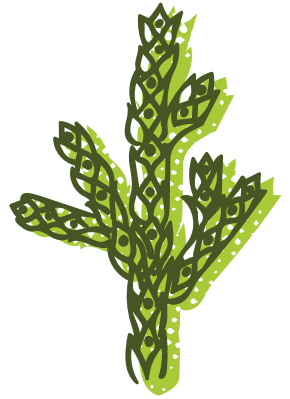
## Did You Know?

The eastern hemlock is actually a member of the pine family.

# EASTERN WHITE CEDAR *Thuja occidentalis*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 90 cm
Age:	Typically up to 200 years, however known to live longer
Bark:	Thin and shiny when young, separates into flat narrow strips with age
Seeds:	7–12 mm long, grown in clumps of 5 or 6
Leaves:	Yellowish green scale like leaves, visible resin glands
Form:	Crown is narrow, conical, and dense
Quick ID Tip:	The bark of the eastern white cedar has a yellow hue



## Where It's Found

Found throughout Ontario and is usually found in swampy areas where the rock underneath is limestone.

## Uses

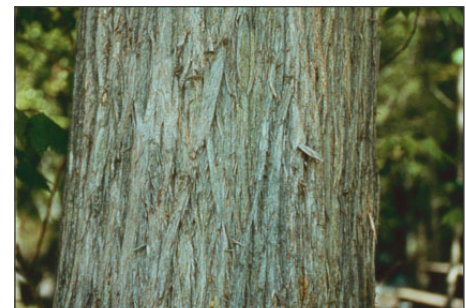
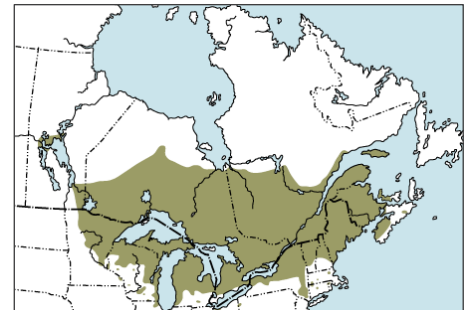
White cedar is naturally resistant to rot and therefore often used in applications where it will be exposed to water or soil. Some of these uses include posts, cedar-strip canoes, decks, saunas and shingles. In addition, white cedar is sought after for use in log cabins due to its signature smell. Traditional Indigenous applications include using the leaves to treat scurvy due to their high vitamin content.

## Wildlife Values

Eastern white cedar is one of the best tree species for preventing soil erosion, as well as stabilizing stream banks and lakeshores. Stands of eastern white cedar also provide shelter for white-tailed deer during the winter months. Small mammals and birds rely on the eastern white cedar for both food and shelter.

## Did You Know?

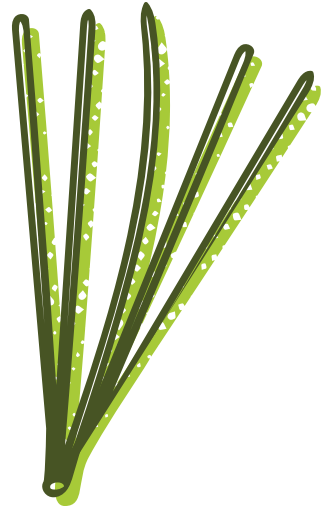
Eastern white cedars have been known to grow for hundreds of years. In fact, there are eastern white cedars in the Niagara Escarpment that are over 700 years old.



# EASTERN WHITE PINE *Pinus strobus*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 40 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 140 cm
Age:	Up to 200 years, sometimes more
Bark:	Dark greyish brown, broad thick ridges that can be 2-5 cm thick
Seeds:	Seed contained in cones, yellowish-green to light brown when mature, 8-20 cm in length
Leaves:	Skinny, 6-12 cm long, in bundles of 5, soft needles, bright green needles
Form:	Somewhat flat top, often one sided due to wind
Quick ID Tip:	Needles come in bundles of 5



## Where It's Found

Found across Ontario.

## Uses

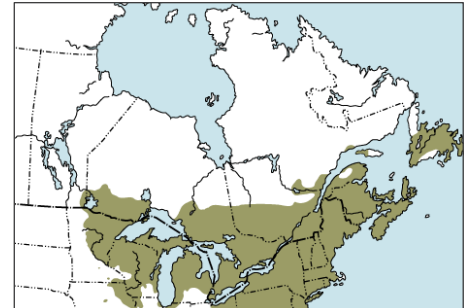
Eastern white pines were used to make masts for the British Royal Navy ships during Colonial times. Today they are used for construction lumber, interior millwork, carving, crates, boxes, and boats. Traditional Indigenous uses include utilizing the inner bark as an emergency food source, and making tea from the needles to treat scurvy.

## Wildlife Values

Female black bears often leave their cubs near old white pine trees, the baby bears can climb the tree easily due to its ridged bark—allowing them to escape predators.

## Did You Know?

White pine is Ontario's provincial tree. It is also featured in many Group of Seven paintings.



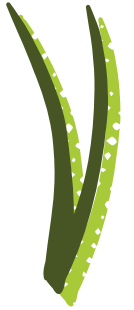


# JACK PINE

*Pinus banksiana*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 20 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 30 cm
Age:	Up to 150 years
Bark:	Thin when young, developed irregular thick flaky plates with age
Seeds:	2.5–8 cm long, skinny and curved, yellowish brown, stay closed unless they experience high temperatures. They do not have a stem attaching them to the branch which is an easy way to tell them apart from other pines such as scots pines.
Leaves:	In bundles of two, 2–4 cm long, divergent (in a v shape)
Form:	Crown is conical, branches arch slightly upwards
Quick ID Tip:	If needles come in short bundles of two and are divergent it is a Jack pine!



## Where It's Found

Found across most of Ontario. It is the most common pine tree in northern Canada. It's small and can grow in almost any kind of soil (even permafrost and rock) as long as it gets lots of sun!



## Uses

Pulpwood, lumber for construction, telephone poles, fence posts, mine timber, railroad ties. They are also used as Christmas trees and are often planted to stabilize watersheds. Indigenous uses include making string from the long roots of the Jack pine, often for use in stitching the bark of canoes.

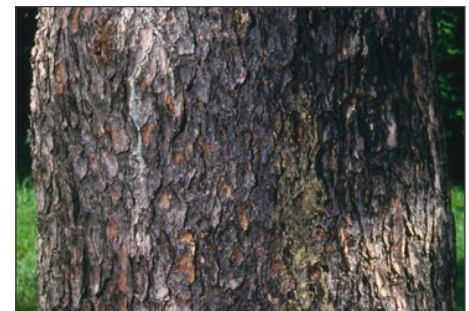


## Wildlife Values

Woodland animals such as squirrels, chipmunks, porcupines, mice, and more use various parts of the tree as a source of food.

## Did You Know?

Jack pines benefit from the heat of forest fires as it opens their pinecones, releasing its seeds. Jack pine are capable of growing in rock and shallow soil, causing them to look gnarled and lopsided. This view was made famous by world renowned Canadian painter Tom Thomson.



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# RED MAPLE

*Acer rubrum*

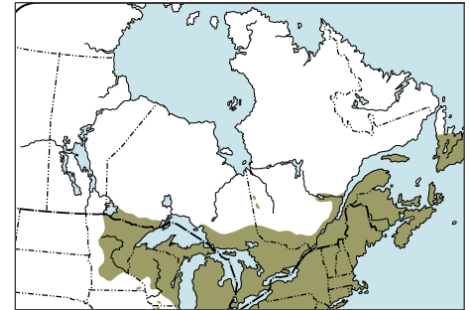
## How to ID

- Height: Up to 25 m
- Trunk Diameter: Up to 60 cm
- Age: Up to 100 years
- Bark: Smooth when young, with age the bark develops scaly ridges that are loose at the ends and fastened at the centre
- Seeds: Seeds contained in samaras, 60° angle between wings, in joined pairs
- Leaves: 3-5 lobes, side of the central lobes are almost parallel to the midvein, side lobes are separated by wide, shallow, angular notches. 5-15 cm in length. Top of leaf in light green, bottom of leaf is whitened. Teeth are sharp and irregular.
- Form: Long dense crown, trunk of the red maple divides near the bottom into several ascending limbs
- Quick ID Tip: The leaf of the red maple is approximately as wide as it is long, it grows distinctive red buds in late winter before its leaves appear



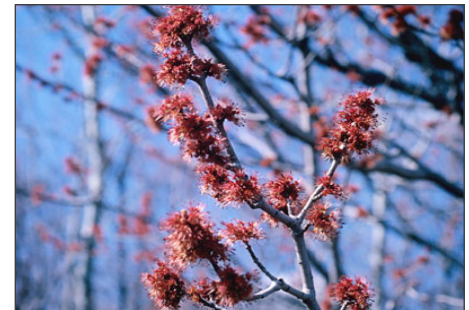
## Where It's Found

Primarily found in central and southern Ontario. Typically grown in swamps and other moist soils.



## Uses

Often used for saw timber and pulpwood. Red maple can also be used for furniture, flooring, cabinetry, paneling, veneer, musical instruments, tool handles, cutting boards, butcher blocks, wooden bowls, and boxes and crates. Indigenous uses include brewing the inner bark as a remedy for coughs and diarrhea.

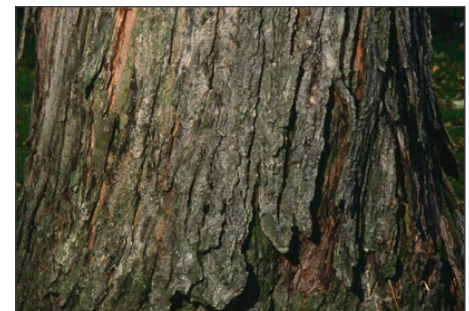


## Wildlife Values

Food source for both deer and moose, as well as squirrels and a variety of bird species. Red maple is used by inchworms and a variety of moths. It also has a special value to honeybees.

## Did You Know?

In the fall the tree is easily recognisable by its brilliantly bright red leaves.



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# RED OAK

*Quercus rubra*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 20–30 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 120 cm
Age:	Up to 150 years
Bark:	When young the bark is dark gray and smooth, as it ages it develops deep ridges
Seeds:	2–3 cm long, round with a scaly cap that covers less than a quarter of the acorn
Leaves:	Dark green, 10–20 cm long, sharp pointed lobes (around 7–9 lobes per leaf)
Form:	Large round crown covering most of the tree
Quick ID Tip:	



## Where It's Found

Can be found east of Lake Superior, and across central and southern Ontario.

## Uses

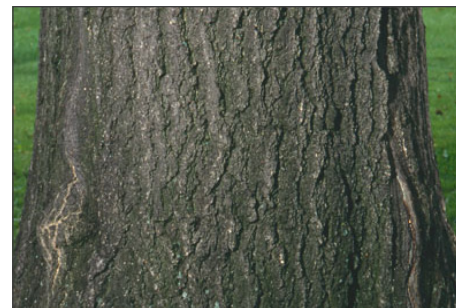
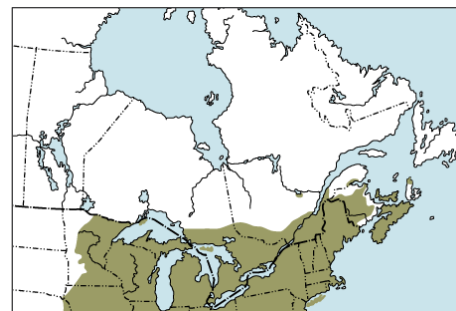
Common source of hardwood lumber. It is often used for furniture, veneer, interior finishing, cabinets, paneling, flooring, agricultural implements, posts, and railway ties. Traditional Indigenous applications include using various parts of the red oak as medicine for the treatment of ailments such as digestive disorders, respiratory diseases, and skin infections.

## Wildlife Values

Food source for deer, elk, moose, and rabbits. Acorns are commonly eaten by a wide variety of both small and large mammals and birds. It also provides shelter and nesting sites for many species of mammals and birds.

## Did You Know?

Sometimes dead leaves stay on oak trees, even in the winter.



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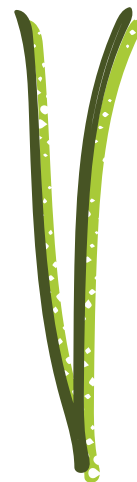


# RED PINE

*Pinus resinosa*

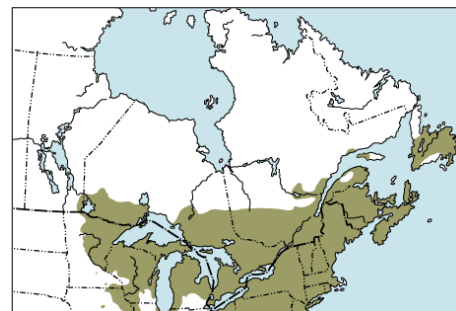
## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 75 cm
Age:	Up to 200 years
Bark:	Reddish-pink with flaky scales, develops deep furrows with age
Seeds:	Seeds contained in oval shaped, mid-sized cones
Leaves:	Needles come in bundles of two and are very long (10–16 cm), dark green needles that break when bent
Form:	Crown is conical on young trees, becoming irregular and flat-topped with age.
Quick ID Tip:	The red pine is the only native pine in eastern Ontario with long needles in bundles of two.



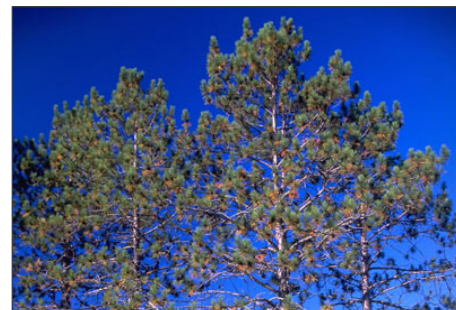
## Where It's Found

The red pine is found across most of Ontario, from Lake Nipigon across to Quebec, and south to the Great Lakes.



## Uses

Red pine wood is strong and is commonly used for poles, pilings, and structural timber. Traditional uses by the Chippewa include clustering, trimming and shaping the needles to make dolls.



## Wildlife Values

Provides shelter and cover for many different mammals and birds. It also provides a source of food for deer, snowshoe hares, chipmunks, mice, and songbirds.

## Did You Know?

Red pine roots are deep and wide spread, making them resistant to strong winds.



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# SILVER MAPLE

*Acer saccharinum*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 35 m
Trunk Diameter:	Over 100 cm
Age:	Up to 130 years
Bark:	Smooth and grey when young, turns reddish brown and breaks into strips as it matures, looks shaggy
Seeds:	Seeds grow inside "keys" (samaras), growing in a "v" shape
Leaves:	5, sometimes 7 lobes, separated by deep notches, with large pointed teeth
Form:	Crown is high and open, covers a large portion of the tree
Quick ID Tip:	The back of the leaf is almost silver in colour, making it easy to identify



## Where It's Found

Across central and southern Ontario.

## Uses

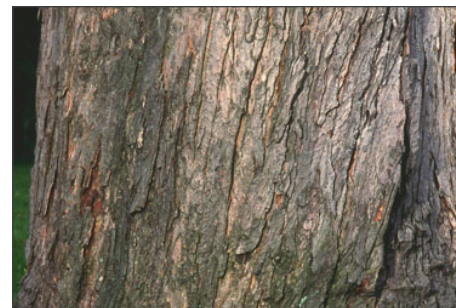
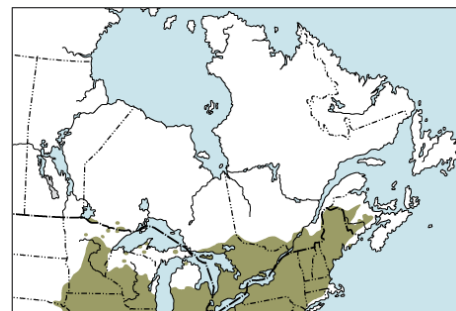
Furniture, cabinetry, paneling, flooring, woodturning, veneer, musical instruments, boxes and crates, tool handles, wagons, carts, and railway ties. Indigenous applications include making sugar from silver maple sap, for use as medicine and in bread, and using the wood to make baskets and furniture.

## Wildlife Values

Important source of food for small mammals and birds. Flowers provide food for squirrels in later winter at a time when their food stores are typically depleted.

## Did You Know?

Sometimes, the trunks of silver maples are hollow, creating space for animals and birds to live in.



# SUGAR MAPLE

*Acer saccharum*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 35 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 90 cm
Age:	Up to 200 years
Bark:	Young bark is smooth and grey, mature bark develops vertical ridges
Seeds:	Contained in "keys" (samaras), wings slightly divergent
Leaves:	8–20 cm long, 5 lobes with long blunt pointed tips and a few irregular jagged teeth. The middle lobe is almost square.
Form:	Large, rounded crown
Quick ID Tip:	The leaf on the Canadian flag is a sugar maple leaf



## Where It's Found

Found in central and southern Ontario.

## Uses

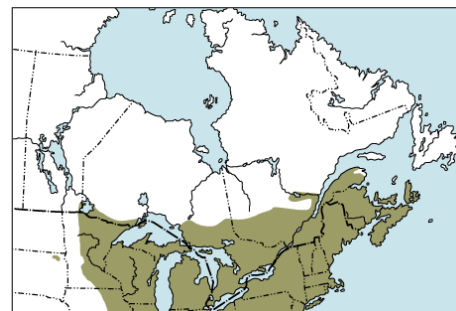
Sap from the sugar maple is used to make maple syrup. The wood is commonly used to make lumber, furniture, flooring and cabinets. In addition to making syrup, Indigenous applications include using the inner bark from the sugar maple as a cough remedy.

## Wildlife Values

A food source for a variety of wildlife. The pollen is beneficial for honeybees as well as other insects.

## Did You Know?

The sap from sugar maple is sweeter than the sap from other tree species, which is why it makes the best maple syrup. It takes about 40 litres of sugar maple sap to make 1 litre of maple syrup.



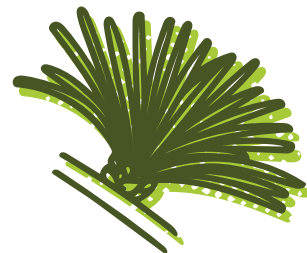
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# TAMARACK

*Larix laricina*

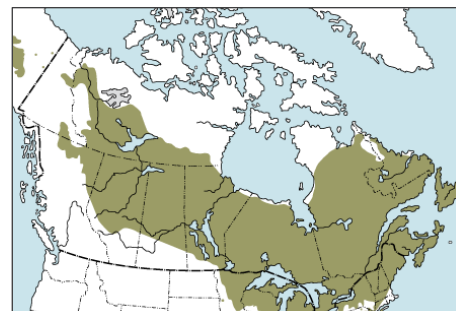
## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 40 cm
Age:	Up to 150 years
Bark:	Smooth, thin, and grey when young, becomes scaly and reddish-brown with age
Seeds:	1–2 cm long cones
Leaves:	Flat, short, in bundle of 10+
Form:	Narrow cone shape with open spaces between branches
Quick ID Tip:	Most conifer trees keep their needles year-round but tamaracks are deciduous conifers—their needles fall off in the autumn and new ones grow in the spring. Needles turn yellow before falling off



## Where It's Found

Found in every province and territory in Canada, and is very common in northern Ontario. They are commonly found in swamps, sphagnum bogs, and upland soils.



## Uses

The tamarack is commonly used to make poles and posts, rough lumber, boxes and crates, and paper/pulpwood. Indigenous uses include brewing tea from tamarack needles as a treatment for scurvy and using the wood to make snow shoes.



## Wildlife Values

Provides shelter from the summer heat for bear, deer, and moose.

## Did You Know?

The word 'tamarack' is from the native Abenaki language, the word means "wood used for snowshoes".



# TREMBLING ASPEN *Populus tremuloides*

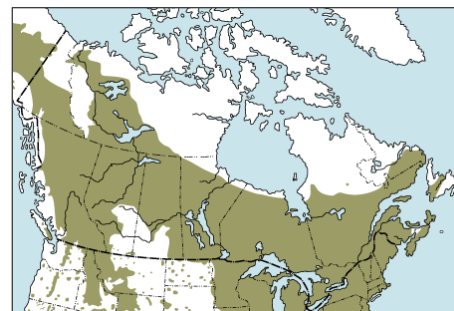
## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 40 cm
Age:	Up to 80 years
Bark:	Pale gray-white with horizontal lines, grows dark and furrowed as it ages
Seeds:	Fluffy seeds are dispersed from hanging green capsules in late spring
Leaves:	Rounded base, kidney shaped, pointed tip, very finely toothed edges, top of leaf is dark green, bottom of leaf very pale green, 3–7 cm in length
Form:	Crown is short and rounded, branches are long with little taper and trunk is branch free on the lower part of the tree
Quick ID Tip:	Easily identified by the way their leaves flutter in the wind giving the appearance that the tree is 'trembling'



## Where It's Found

Across all of Ontario except the most northern fringe near Hudson Bay. Occurs in most forested areas throughout Canada.



## Uses

Most commonly used for various pulp products such as books, newsprint, and fine printing paper. Also used for veneer and oriented strand board. Traditional Indigenous applications include using the wood as tent poles, fuel, and in the construction of canoes, and using chewed roots on wounds to stop bleeding.

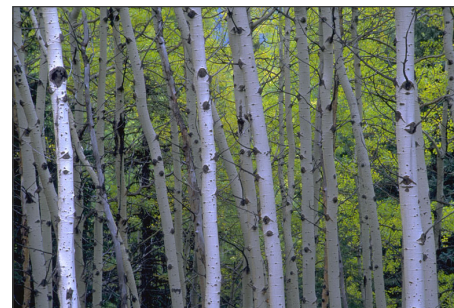


## Wildlife Values

Trembling aspen is a food source for various mammals such as deer, moose, beaver, and snowshoe hares, as well as many species of birds.

## Did You Know?

Trembling aspen can form expansive colonies by sending up new trunks as an old trunk dies. One colony in Utah is estimated to be over 80,000 years old.



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# WHITE BIRCH

*Betula papyrifera*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 40 cm
Age:	Up to 120 years
Bark:	Thin, smooth, white bark that peels off easily in large sheets. The bark is very strong and pliable
Seeds:	Pollen catkins in clusters of 1–3
Leaves:	Triangular, 5–10 cm long, dull green on top, light green and slightly hairy on bottom
Form:	Ascending branches, narrowly oval and open crown
Quick ID Tip:	Can be easily identified by their white papery bark



## Where It's Found

The white birch is found everywhere in Ontario except for along the shores of Hudson Bay.

## Uses

Most commonly used for firewood and to make veneer. Indigenous applications include using white birch to make canoes, paper, and twine. It is also used for a unique art form called "birch bark biting" which consists of folding sheets of birch bark and making small bites in them to create an intricate and unique pattern once unfolded.

## Wildlife Values

The buds, catkins, and seeds are food for birds and small mammals. Moose, snowshoe hare, and white-tailed deer browse paper birch.

## Did You Know?

Peeling off too much of the white birch's bark can kill the tree. Birch bark has been used as paper for thousands of years with the oldest known manuscripts from Gandharan Buddhist texts in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.



# WHITE SPRUCE

*Picea glauca*

## How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 60 cm
Age:	Typically up to 200 years, however known to live longer
Bark:	Thin and smooth when young, scales develop with age
Seeds:	Seeds contained in thin, cylindrical, and stalkless cones
Leaves:	Green to bluish-green, 15-22 mm, straight and stiff, when crushed they produce an unpleasant smell
Form:	Broadly conical, dense foliage near the top, branches are more spaced out near the bottom, tips gradually upturned
Quick ID Tip:	Crush needles to release an unpleasant smell



## Where It's Found

Throughout all Canada, except for the Pacific Coast

## Uses

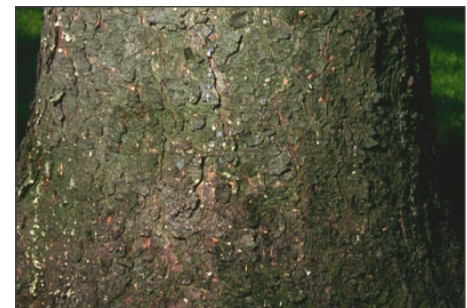
Construction lumber and pulp. Indigenous applications include using saplings to make snowshoes and bows, and heating the gum from the tree to create glue to fasten arrowheads.

## Wildlife Values

Provide nesting sites, shelter, and food for various wildlife including black bears, various birds, grouse, rabbits, and deer.

## Did You Know?

The world's oldest living tree is a spruce tree located in the mountains of western Sweden and nicknamed Old Tjikko. The tree is 9,550 years old! White spruce trees have been known to live to 800 years or longer.



# YELLOW BIRCH

## *Betula alleghaniensis*

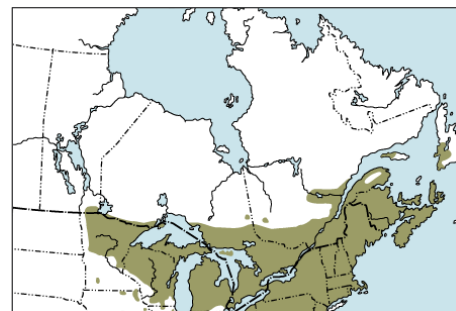
### How to ID

Height:	Up to 25 m
Trunk Diameter:	Up to 60 cm
Age:	Up to 150 years
Bark:	Thin papery shreds which end in tight curls, not readily peeling. Colour starts out reddish-brown and yellows with age.
Seeds:	Seed catkins are oval and short (1.5–2 cm long), pollen catkins grow to be 8 cm at pollination.
Leaves:	8–11 cm long, oval shaped with a sharp tip, rounded base with a small indent, straight parallel veins (9+ per side), the end of each vein has a large tooth with 2 or 3 smaller teeth in between each vein.
Form:	Crown is irregularly rounded with large branches that are widespread with the tips drooping downwards.
Quick ID Tip:	Scratch a small section of the twig—if it smells like wintergreen it's a yellow birch!



### Where It's Found

Primarily across southern and central Ontario and into some northern parts of the province.



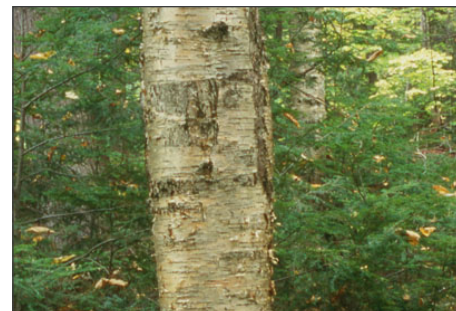
### Uses

Used for furniture, flooring, cabinetry, charcoal, pulp, interior finish, veneer, tool handles, boxes, wooden-ware, and interior doors. It is commonly used for lumber because its wood is heavy, close-grained, and even-textured. Traditional Indigenous applications include making a decoction out of the bark for use as a blood purifier.



### Wildlife Values

A variety of bird species use yellow birch for food and breeding habitat. White-tailed deer enjoy browsing seedlings, green leaves, and woody stems of the yellow birch. Some other mammals such as moose and squirrels can also use the tree as a food source.



### Did You Know?

The yellow birch is the largest of all birch trees.

**#ItTakesAForest**