

BLACK SPRUCE (Picea Mariana)



<p>A. Identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaves ---needle-like, 8 to 15 mm long, blunt pointed, dull grayish green ---lines of white dots on under surface ---needles set along the twig • cones ---seed cones (female) are small and purplish ---old cones hang on trees for several years ---pollen cones (male) are dark red • bark ---reddish brown/grayish brown ---thin, scaly or shredded when young and become darker with large scales when older ---exposed bark is olive green or yellowish green • wood ---gets a creamy white / straw color with the grain running straight ---look is not very different between heartwood and sapwood ---wood dries easily with little or no cracking
<p>B. Climate /habitat / location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grows on a variety of sites but can be confined to wet, poorly drained sites, in pure stands with tamarack • on the northward it grows on moist, organic soils mixed with jack pine, white spruce, balsam fir, white birch and trembling aspen • it grows in poor growing conditions and is frequently found in cold, poorly-drained areas such as swamps and bogs
<p>C. Growing Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on poorly drained sites trees are up to 20 m high and 30 cm in diameter (small) • on well drained sites trees grow up to 30 m high and 60 cm in diameter • root system is very shallow especially on organic soils
<p>D. Reproduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by seed and by vegetative layering
<p>E. Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional---Carrier people used black spruce wood to make fish traps ---other aboriginal people made snowshoe frames and drying racks ---powdered resin was used on wounds to speed up healing • modern ---long fibers make this a preferred pulp for paper products
<p>F. Fun Facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • red squirrels remove cones from the top of the tree which create a thick, dense, clump of branches at the top

of the tree

- tree leaves are used for perfume and as a main ingredient for spruce beer
- spruce grouse feed entirely on spruce needles in winter

Bibliography:

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