

Black Spruce
Picea mariana



Identification:

Leaves: needle-like, straight, 8-15mm long, blunt pointed, dull grayish-green, lines of white dots more prominent on the undersurface; needles densely set along the twig, side needles at right angles, and upper needles pointing forward.

Cones: seed cones (female) are small and purplish. The old cones hang on the tree for several years. Pollen cones (male) are dark red.

Bark: reddish-brown or grayish-brown, thin, scaly or shredded when young, becoming darker with larger scales when mature. Newly exposed bark is olive green or yellowish-green.

Wood: attains a creamy white or straw color. The graining runs straight and there is little visual difference between heartwood and sapwood. There is little shrinkage to the fibers; the wood dries easily with little or minimal cracking.

Climate/Habitat/Location: Grows on a variety of sites. It is generally confined to wet poorly drained sites in the southern part of its range, in pure stands, or with tamarack. Northward, it usually grows on moist organic soils in extensive pure stands, or mixed with jack pine, white spruce, balsam fir, white birch and trembling aspen. Moderately shade tolerant. Black spruce

tolerates poor growing conditions. It is frequently found in cold, poorly drained areas, such as swamps and bogs.

Growing Characteristics: On poorly drained sites, trees are small, up to 20m high and 30cm in diameter. On well drained upland sites, trees are medium-sized, up to 30m high and 60cm in diameter. Root system is very shallow, especially on organic soils with a high water table.

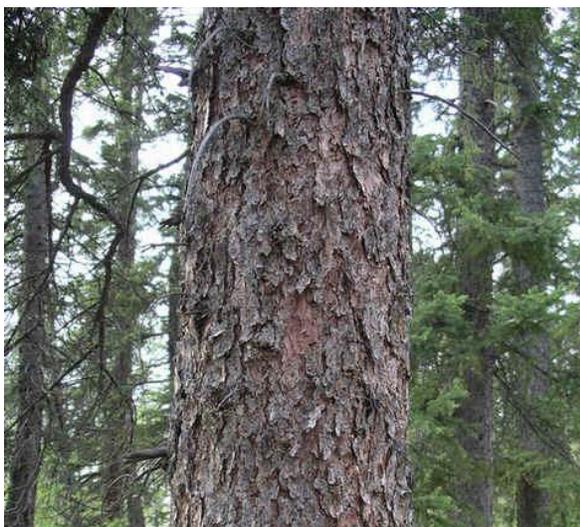
Reproduction: Reproduces by seed and by vegetative layering.

Uses: Traditional - The Carrier people used black spruce wood to make fish traps. Other aboriginal people made snowshoe frames and drying racks. They also used powdered resin on wounds to speed healing.

Modern - The long fibers in black spruce make this a preferred pulp species for paper products.

Fun Facts:

- ✚ The red squirrels remove the cones from near the top of the black spruce trees, which can create a thick dense clump of branches at the top of the tree.
- ✚ Special uses of the trees leaves include distillation for perfume and as a main ingredient for spruce beer.
- ✚ Spruce grouse feed entirely on spruce needles in winter.





Distribution of Black Spruce in North America

<http://azael100.tripod.com/id3.html>

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