

# TAMARACK



<p><b>A. Identification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>leaves</b>--needle-like, 3-sided and blue green           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- needles turn bright yellow in autumn</li> <li>--from 2 years and older, the needles grow in groups of 15-25 on short, woody parts which stay on the twig after the needles fall</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>fruit/cones</b>--small, round seed cones are red at flowering and then brown with age           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--pollen cones are yellow</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>bark</b>---thin, smooth and gray when young and later become reddish brown and scaly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>wood</b>--has yellowish-brown wood in the middle and somewhat whitish sapwood           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--annual growth rings are easy to see</li> <li>--in harsh weather conditions, the wood changes color over time and turns silvery grey</li> <li>--is coarse to the touch</li> <li>--is more or less oily and somewhat waxy to the touch</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Distribution / Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• occurs from northwest Canada to the east coast</li> <li>• in B.C. and the Yukon tamarack is found in only small stands</li> <li>• grows at sea level in the north and at higher elevation in the southern part of its range</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. Climate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be found in many different climates</li> <li>• will only grow with a lot of sunlight and not under the canopy of other fast growing trees</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. Habitat:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• found on cold, wet, soils such as sphagnum bogs and muskeg</li> <li>• often mixed with Black and White Spruce, Trembling Aspen, and White Birch</li> </ul>
<p><b>E. Growing characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• medium-sized trees up to 24 m high, 40 cm in diameter and up to 150 years old</li> <li>• trunk is slender, straight or crooked</li> </ul>

- crown is shaped like a cone and gets scrappy looking with age
- main branches are horizontal
- root systems are not deep but are wide-spreading
- in bogs where the soil is poor (near the tree line in the far north) the trees are stunted with short needles and narrow scales

**F. Reproduction:**

- both pollen cones and seed cones can be found on the tree
- pollen grows in the yellow-colored male cone and is transferred by wind to the female cone where development takes place
- ripe seeds drop and if conditions are good the seeds will start growing
- bogs and muskeg are not good seedbeds unless there is a dry year

**G. Uses:**

- **traditional**---some native groups chewed tamarack resin to help with an upset stomach  
--in the days of wooden sailing ships the tamarack roots were used to build parts of the ship
- **modern**---it produces a heavy, strong wood used mainly for pulp, but also for posts, poles, and firewood

**H. Fun facts:**

- tamarack occurs in every province and territory of Canada
- is one of the fastest growing conifers when planted in well-drained soil
- comes from the Algonquin word “akemantak” meaning “wood used for snowshoes”
- has the strongest wood of all the conifers

**Bibliography:**

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/library/documents/treebook/tamarack.htm>

[http:// www.treesfortomorrow.com/seedling.htm](http://www.treesfortomorrow.com/seedling.htm) (just a picture, no information)

<http://forestry.about.com/library/tree/bltam.htm>

<http://www.quebecwoodexport.com/eng/softwood/tamarack.htm>

[http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/2010/panich\\_just/Site/Reproduction.html](http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/2010/panich_just/Site/Reproduction.html)

[http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/2010/panich\\_just/Site/Habitat.html](http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/2010/panich_just/Site/Habitat.html)