



WHITE SPRUCE

Picea glauca

The white spruce is a medium or large sized, coniferous tree with needle-like leaves. Its common name is derived from the white, waxy layer on the foliage. The crown of the white spruce is broad and conical, giving younger trees a pyramidal silhouette, which matures into a column-like shape. The white spruce is one of North America's hardiest trees and can live up to 300 years old, although 100 to 250 years is the typical lifespan.

Mature white spruce trees can grow up to 30 metres tall, depending on growing conditions. The trunk of the white spruce usually measures between 0.3 and 0.6 meters in diameter.



TREE

IDENTIFICATION

The needles of the white spruce are up to 2 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ "") long, covered with a whitish waxy powder and are 4-sided with a sharp tip.

The needles are arranged in a spiral around twig. When crushed they have a very pungent smell.

Pollen cones are pale red while seed cones are bright purple.

Seed cones are 5-7 cm long, cylindrical with thin light brown scales and are found hanging from the upper branches of the trees.

The bark of the white spruce is a dark greyish to brown colour. The bark is quite smooth when the tree is young but gets very scaly when mature.





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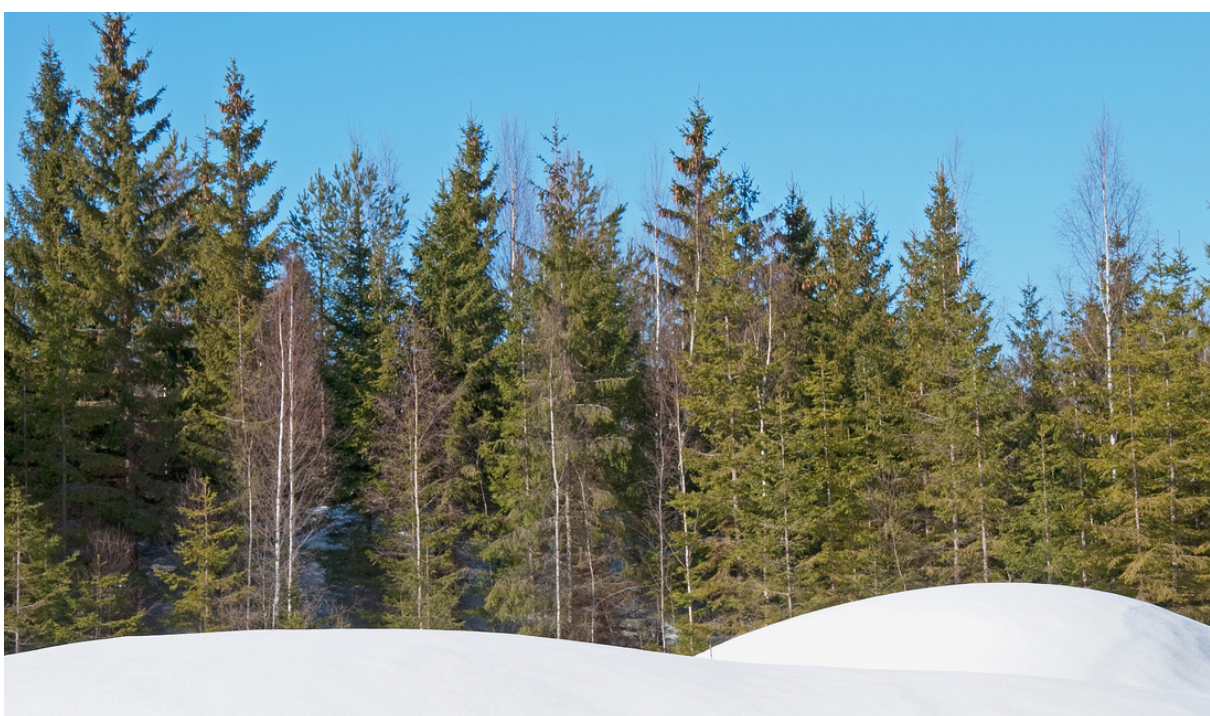
HABITAT & RANGE



The white spruce tree has one of the largest ranges of any conifer. It is one of the most northerly trees in North America. It can be found from Newfoundland to Alaska, and down to the northern United States throughout the boreal forest, bogs and uplands.



It grows in most soil types but grows best in well-drained soils. It has some shade tolerance but will grow the fastest and will have the best form in full sunlight.



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INTERESTING FACTS

Red squirrels often feed on white spruce seeds. Piles of the left over scales and cones are often seen on the forest floor at a favoured feeding site.

They are sometimes used as Christmas trees, although in Eastern Canada the balsam fir is the predominant species used as a Christmas tree.

White spruce up to 1000 years old have been seen.

The bark, branches, buds and seeds of the white spruce are browsed on by rabbits, birds and small rodents on PEI. In other provinces wildlife such as deer and porcupines also feed on the white spruce.

White spruce is an important source of lumber and pulpwood.

It is predicted that suitable habitat for white spruce will decline with climate change.

References

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