

Maine Tree Species Fact Sheet

Common Name: Eastern Redcedar

Botanical Name: *Juniperus virginiana*

Tree Type: Conifer

Physical Description:

Growth Habit: Eastern redcedar is a long-lived, small to medium sized tree or shrub. The leaves on young growth are awl shaped and sharp, and generally occur in whorls of three. Mature foliage is scale like and opposite or overlapping. The yellowish-green to bluish-green leaves are extremely variable. They remain on the tree for five to six years, growing hard and woody the third season. Branchlets appear square in the cross section. Eastern redcedar grows on poor soils, gravely slopes, and rocky ridges and on moist, sandy ground.

Height: Eastern redcedar reaches a height of 50 feet with an 8-20 foot spread.

Shape: Eastern redcedar is densely pyramidal when young and slightly pendulous when mature. Young trees have slender horizontal branches and a narrow, compact, conical head. The crown of older trees becomes broad and rounded.

Fruit/Seed Description/Dispersal Methods:

Eastern redcedar is dioecious. Yellowish-brown staminate cones occur in abundance at the tips of small twigs. The berrylike, bluish-purple, pistillate cones are borne on axillary branches of new scale leaves. Each cone contains one to four rounded, smooth, brown to yellowish-brown seeds.

Range within Maine:

Eastern redcedar is not a common species in the state of Maine. It can be found in southern Maine, Bridgton, Porter, Denmark and West Gardiner. This tree is hardy to Zone 3.

Distinguishing Features:

The bark is thin, fibrous, reddish-brown and exfoliates in narrow strips.

Interesting Features:

Eastern redcedar is a source of cedarwood oil which is used in a variety of fragrance compounds used for making soaps, inhalants, liniments, cosmetics, insecticides, polishes and perfumes.

The wood is attractive, durable, fine textured, and easily worked. It is commonly used to make fence posts, poles and interior paneling. The fragrant, richly colored purplish red wood is reported to repel moths and is used to make cedar chests and closet or cupboard liners.



Relationship to Wildlife:

Eastern redcedar provides important food and cover for many wildlife species including birds, rabbits, fox, skunk, opossum and coyote.

Landscape Use:

Eastern redcedar is a valuable ornamental and is widely used in landscaping. It is an excellent specimen, grouping and screening plant and is also useful for windbreaks, hedges and topiary work.

Common Problems or Pests of the Tree in Maine:

Eastern redcedar is susceptible to cedar apple rust and bagworms.

References:

Forest Trees of Maine, Twelfth Edition. Maine Forest Service/Department of Conservation. 1995.

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, 5th Edition. Dirr, Michael A. Publishing L.L.C. 1998.

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/junvir/all.html>



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