

Vermont Tree Guide: Top 9 Species

Tree identification can be a daunting task. This guide is intended to help get you started by focusing on the top nine most common forest tree species in Vermont. Approximately 80% of all trees in Vermont are the following nine species. There are an additional 40 tree species that total the remaining 20%. Some species are more locally abundant than others, but this guide highlights the most distinguishing features of each species. If you would like to learn more about a particular species visit go.uvm.edu/vermonttrees for a short video and additional identifying characteristics.

SUGAR MAPLE

Acer saccharum



BRANCH PATTERN: Opposite.

LEAVES: Five major points, no teeth or serrate margin. Dark green above, pale color below.

BARK: Brownish gray, can have a whitewashed appearance; never shaggy.

HABITAT: Forests with moist, well-drained soils.

FUN FACT: Vermont's State Tree!

RED MAPLE

Acer rubrum



BRANCH PATTERN: Opposite.

LEAVES: Three major points, has serrate margin; green in summer and turns red in fall.

BARK: Bluish-gray, ranges from smooth to very shaggy.

BUDS: Round, red, found in clusters.

HABITAT: Wide range from dry to moist soils, low to high elevation.

EASTERN HEMLOCK

Tsuga canadensis



LEAVES: Needles are flat, tapering, and rounded at the tip and grow in an irregular pattern. Two white stripes are found on the underside of each needle.

BARK: Gray-brown, relatively smooth; becomes cinnamon brown, with thick, ridges forming flat plates.

CONES: 3/4 inch long, oblong, light brown.

HABITAT: Often grows in shaded forest, very little understory vegetation.

For informational videos about each species, visit go.uvm.edu/vermonttrees

Illustrations by David More, from *Trees of Eastern North America*, by Gil Nelson, Christopher J. Earle, and Richard Spellenberg, Princeton University Press, 2014.

EASTERN WHITE PINE

Pinus strobus



LEAVES: Long, slender needles (3-6 inches) in groups of 5.

BARK: Smooth, develops scales that form ridges.

BRANCHES: In whorls, circles the stem.

HABITAT: Pioneer species on old fields and other disturbed sites.

YELLOW BIRCH

Betula alleghaniensis



LEAVES: Simple, double toothed edge.

BARK: Golden, metallic in color.

TWIGS: Taste/smells like wintergreen when a twig is broken.

HABITAT: Well and poorly drained sites, mixed with hardwood species.

AMERICAN BEECH

Fagus grandifolia



LEAVES: Leaves have one tooth at the end of each vein.

BARK: Healthy bark is very smooth, gray; diseased bark is pockmarked.

FRUIT: Husk with hooked prickles encapsulates triangular nuts; important wildlife food source.

HABITAT: Shade tolerant, well drained sites.

WHITE ASH

Fraxinus americana



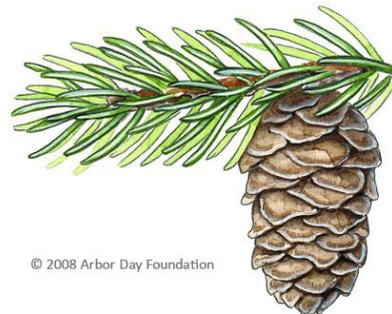
LEAVES: Opposite, compound, 5-7 leaflets.

BARK: Interlocking diamond pattern.

HABITAT: Well-drained soils, mixed hardwoods.

RED SPRUCE

Picea rubens



LEAVES: Spikey needles (1/2 inch long), angular in cross section.

BARK: Gray to reddish-brown, lacks resin blisters.

HABITAT: Both conifer and mixed woods forests.

BALSAM FIR

Abies balsamea



LEAVES: Needles are flat (3/4- 1 inch) attached to twig by a "suction cup".

BARK: Mottled, silver in color with resin blisters.

HABITAT: Shade tolerant, found in conifer forests.