

Larix laricina

Tamarack
American Larch

Native to Maine

Upland
Wetlands and Low-Land Areas

Leaves



Keith Kanoti, Maine Forest Service



Tamarack has glossy, blueish green, 3-sided needles that grow in soft tufts of up to 30 needles. The needles are 1 to 2 cm long.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 SIMPLE	 NEEDLE	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 ROUND	 WAVY

Seasonal Change



Steven Katovich, USDA Forest Service



The needles turn yellow in the fall before dropping (it is a deciduous conifer!). Male and female flowers produce red cones 1 to 2.5 cm long.

Plant



Bill Cook, Michigan State University



Look for a small to medium tree (up to 24 m tall) that typically grows in swamps and other low-land areas. It's coniferous (cone-bearing) with bare branches in winter.

Stem



Forestry Images user Robert Vidéki



Look for scaly bark that is gray to reddish-brown. Bark on young stems is thin and reddish brown with small fine hairs. Look for spurs on branches.

Similar Species

European larch and Tamarack have similar appearances. Tamarack has shorter needles and cones than the European larch, which is taller than its American cousin, growing up to 34 m tall.

Fun Fact

Tamarack is very cold tolerant and is able to survive winter temperatures down to -65°C. The tender spring shoots are nutritious, and can be eaten when they are boiled. The bark was used by native Americans to cure many ailments.