

# 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  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <br>ALTERNATE  | <br>SIMPLE             | <br>NEEDLE  | <br>SMOOTH    |
| <br>OPPOSITE | <br>COMPOUND-PALMATE | <br>OVAL  | <br>TOOTHED |
| <br>WHORLED  | <br>COMPOUND-PINNATE | <br>ROUND | <br>WAVY    |

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.