



## EASTERN WHITE PINE *Pinus Strobus* L.



*Maine is known as the “Pine Tree State” and the Eastern white pine is the official tree of the State of Maine.*

**E**astern white pine has been an important tree for the people of what is now the State of Maine for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Maine has come to be known as the “Pine Tree State.” Recognizing its importance, in 1895 the Maine legislature designated the “Pine Cone and Tassel” as Maine’s official floral emblem. In 1945 the legislature Resolved: “That the white pine tree be, and hereby is, designated the official tree of the State of Maine.”

The availability and high quality of white pine lumber has played an important part in the development and economy of Maine since 1605, when Captain George Weymouth of the British Royal Navy collected samples here and brought them back to England for display. The shortage of ship masts in Europe led to England’s Broad Arrow Policy in 1691, whereby pines 24 inches or more in diameter within 3 miles of water were blazed with **the mark of the**





**broad arrow**; such trees to be reserved for use in the Royal Navy. The term **King's Arrow Pine** originated from this policy. Most of the accessible virgin pine was cut by 1850. Lumber production reached its peak in 1909, but white pine is still a valuable species that contributes greatly to the economy of the state.

White pine occurs in all localities in the state in moist situations, on uplands and on sandy soil, but develops best on fertile, well-drained soils. On sandy soil it often becomes established in pure or nearly pure stands. It is one of the major species planted in the state. The tree grows rapidly both in height and diameter, making an average growth in height of 1 foot or more each year.

When growing in the open, the young tree is symmetrical and conical in outline except when deformed by white pine weevil. White pine weevil is an insect that kills the topmost shoot, and often causes the tree to have multiple stems and a round profile. In the forest, a white pine tree has a narrow head; and

the trunk is commonly free of live branches for a considerable portion of its length. Old forest trees have a broad and somewhat irregular head. The branches are horizontal and in regular whorls, usually of 5 each. Very old trees often become very irregular and picturesque. The trunk tapers gradually, and the tree often attains a height of 100 feet. Commonly it is from 70–80 feet tall, and has a diameter of 1–3 feet.

The **bark** of young trees is smooth and thin, green with a reddish-brown tinge overall, or brown in spots. On old trees, it is from 1–2 inches thick, very dark, and divided into broad, flat ridges by shallow fissures.

**Leaves** are in clusters of 5, flexible, 3–5 inches long, bluish-green but whitish on one side. The papery sheath at the base of the new needle clusters falls in late August.

The **cones** are 4–8 inches long, cylindrical and borne on a long stalk. They take 2 years to mature, and open to discharge the seed shortly after ripening





*Young bark (left) and old bark (right).*

in late August through September of the second season.

The **wood** is light in color and durable, except when in prolonged contact with moisture. It is soft, not heavy and is easily worked. The wood is used extensively for interior trim, doors, windows, cabinetmaking, sash and door manufacture, patternmaking, furniture, small building construction, interior and exterior finish, and boat planking.

Pine furniture is always popular in North America. Lumber from Maine is

sold from Newfoundland to Washington state and south into Mexico. Lower grade boards have clear sections cut to size for sale. These clear short pieces may also be finger-jointed to create longer lengths of clear wood. Any part of a pine not making log grade is used for pulp. Ceiling tiles and paper are made from this pulp.



*Eastern white pine leaves (needles) are 3–5 inches long and in clusters of 5.*

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| <p>NATIONAL AND MAINE REGISTER OF BIG TREES 2008</p> <p><b>Eastern White Pine</b></p> <p>Circumference: 229"</p> <p>Height: 125'</p> <p>Crown Spread: 72'</p> <p>Location: Morrill</p> <p>Nominator: C. Brown 2004</p> |
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