

Eastern White Cedar

Thuja occidentalis

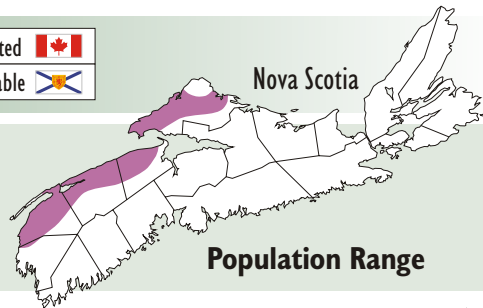
STATUS

Not Listed 

Vulnerable 

59

Nova Scotia



Located in western Nova Scotia with an estimated population of 13,000-15,000 individuals.



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Species Description

The Eastern White Cedar is an evergreen tree that grows, on average, to heights of 10-20 meters with diameters of 30-60 cm. It has flattened branches with small scale-like leaves (1-2 mm). The reddish-brown bark has characteristic narrow vertical lines that tend to peel. The small ovoid (egg-shaped) cones are 1 cm long, occur in clusters, and are yellow-green when immature and brown when mature.

Habitat

Found in riparian areas along streams, in swamps, along lakeshores, in woodland forests and in old pastures. It is shade-tolerant and typically occurs in cool, moist habitats that are nutrient rich. It does best in moderate drainage conditions that are neither too wet nor dry.



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Eastern White Cedar is typically observed in cool, moist shaded areas.

Interesting Points

- Plays an important role in Mi'kmaw smudging ceremonies.
- Valued wood product due to its high decay resistance.
- Birds and mammals use it for shelter and food.
- Grows slowly but has a long lifespan (400+ years).
- Stunted cedars on the limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment are 700-1600 years old!
- Naturally resistant to insects and disease.



Seedling

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Cedar branches

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Similar Species

Eastern Hemlock:

Scaly brown to red-brown bark with wide grooves; short, flattened, shiny green leaves (10-20 mm long); ovoid cones (1.5-2.5 cm long), green to purple when immature and brown when mature; grows to heights of 30 m with trunk diameters of 60-90 cm.



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Threats to Survival

- Historic population declines from land clearing for farms and urban areas.
- Habitat alteration (due to road building and forestry practices such as clearcutting).
- Browsing by deer and rabbits may damage seedlings.



© USDA

Unopened cones

How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and report sightings. Avoid cutting down cedars on your property. When managing woodlots containing cedars, avoid clearcutting and use alternative harvesting techniques.



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Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: NS DNR (902) 679-6091

Info: www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/biodiv/specieslist.htm

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447 or sightings@speciesatrisk.ca