

*Picea rubens*

[Synonyms : *Abies nigra*, *Picea australis*, *Picea nigra* var. *rubra*, *Picea rubra*]

**RED SPRUCE** is an evergreen tree. Native to northern and eastern North America it has needle-like leaves and often clustered oblong, reddish-brown cones.

It is also known as Adirondack spruce, American red spruce, Black spruce, Blue spruce, Canadian red spruce, Canadian spruce, Double spruce, Eastern spruce, He balsam, North American red spruce, Spruce gum, Spruce pine, West Virginia spruce, and Yellow spruce.

Warning – prolonged contact with the fresh wood can cause dermatitis.

*Rubens* means ‘red’ with reference to the reddish-brown cones.

Some of the North American Chippewa Indians used the needle-like leaves to make a beverage.

The bark provided Cherokee Indians with material not only for building but also basketry.

Chippewa Indians sewed their canoes with the roots – and caulked the seams with the gum.

Records show that a few tribes valued medicinal properties in the tree. While it was a remedy for lung and throat disorders for the Montagnais Indians, the Cherokee tribe used it to treat colds and measles.

The resin is used today as a commercial ingredient in chewing gum.

The tree contributes today in some areas to local Christmas tree stock.

Red spruce was once used for building ships. Although some authorities believe that at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries most of the wood is pulped, it can still be sought after for making a wide range of products including furniture, sounding boards for pianos, window frames, doors, flooring and crates. It is also used for manufacturing board and pulping for paper.

Red spruce is a Canadian provincial emblem adopted by Nova Scotia.