

Pinus strobus

[Synonyms : *Leucopytis strobus*, *Pinus alba*, *Pinus chiapensis*, *Pinus strobus* var. *chiapensis*, *Pinus weymouthiana*, *Strobus strobus*]

WHITE PINE is an evergreen tree. Native to eastern North America it has needle-like leaves and cylindrical brown cones.

It is also known as American deal pine, American white pine, American yellow pine, Apple pine, Balsam pine, *Borovica hladká* (Slovak), *Borovica Weymouthova* (Slovak), *Borovice hedvábná* (Czech), *Borovice vejmutovka* (Czech), Canadian white pine, Canadian yellow pine, Chiapas pine, Chiapas white pine, Cork pine, Deal pine, *Den* (Dutch), Eastern pine, Eastern white pine, *Kiefer* (German), Minnesota soft white pine, Minnesota white pine, New England pine, Northern pine, Northern white pine, Ottawa pine, Ottawa white pine, Pattern pine, *Pin blanc* (French-Canadian), *Pin du Canada* (French-Canadian), *Pin du lord* (French), Pine, *Pino strobo* (Italian), *Pin Weymouth* (French), Pumpkin pine, Quebec pine, Quebec yellow pine, Sapling pine, Silver pine, Soft cork white pine, Soft deal-pine, Soft pine, Soft white pine, Spruce pine, *Strobe* (German), *Strobus*, *Strobusmänty* (Finnish), Tonawanda pine, *Vejmutovka* (Czech), *Weimutskiefer* (German), *Weymouthmänty* (Finnish), Weymouth pine, *Weymouths-Kiefer* (Dutch), *Weymouthtall* (Swedish), *Weymuthkiefer* (German), White soft pine, Wisconsin white pine, and Yellow pine.

The bark yields white pine tar.

Warning – working with the wood could cause dermatitis and some breathing problems.

Strobus is the Latin name for a gum-yielding tree.

The tree provided food for the North American Iroquois Indians and some of the Chippewa.

The Micmac tribe made a drink with the bark.

Iroquois Indians took a decoction of the knots to enhance their appetite and they believed that the smoke of burning branches would expel ghosts from a home to which the occupants were returning.

Of the North American Indian tribes it was the Cherokee who used the wood for building and for their 30-40 ft. long canoes. Micmac Indians burnt the wood as fuel.

Some of the Chippewa tribe used the boughs to make their bedding, while both they and the Potawatomi used the pitch for waterproofing or caulking seams in their canoes or boats.

A twig decoction was used by the Iroquois to treat neck boils on any of their horses.

The Menominee are understood to have held white pine in particular regard as the source of one of the tribe's most important human medicines. The inner bark was harvested from saplings according to a special ritual that was not only accompanied by a song but also required that some of their pipe smoking mixture be buried near the young tree's roots. The inner bark was either shredded as a poultice ingredient for treating ulcers, sores and wounds, or steeped to provide a medicinal remedy for chest pain. Iroquois Indians used parts of the tree to treat blood ailments, stomach upsets, liver problems, venereal disease and rheumatism – and they also used it to cause vomiting. It was a treatment for tuberculosis and a remedy for sore throats for both the Montagnais and Iroquois tribes. They and the Micmac, Mohican and some of the Algonkin all took it for colds and the Iroquois, Micmac, Shinnecock, Mohican and Abnaki tribes all used it to ease coughs.

Like the Menominee, the Iroquois and some of the Delaware, prescribed it for treating lung problems and the Micmac tribe and some of the Delaware also used it as a remedy for various kidney disorders. Headaches were eased with it by some of the Chippewa tribe – for whom the tree also offered a stimulant. Micmac Indians used white pine to treat scurvy. It has already been mentioned that the Menominee applied it to wounds and skin disorders and they were not alone in this practice. The Chippewa, Iroquois and Micmac tribes all used it for wounds too, and they and the Mohican, Potawatomi and some of the Delaware treated various skin problems with it as well.

White pine's long cones and tassels were adopted as a state 'flower' emblem by Maine in the United States in 1895 and she adopted the tree itself as a separate emblem in 1945. (It is pointed out by authorities however that plants in the *Pinus* genus are viewed as gymnosperms. As such they have reproductive structures known as 'strobili' not 'flowers'. It is further noted that, as a result, Maine is the only American State to have an official strobila emblem.) It was not until 1955 that Michigan (in the United States) also adopted white pine as a tree emblem for the State. The Canadian province of Ontario has adopted white pine as an emblem too.

In parts of the North American Continent the tree is considered to have some popularity as a Christmas tree.

In the early 18th Century shortly after white pine's introduction to Britain from North America, Viscount Weymouth planted many of them at Longleat, in Wiltshire and this led to one of its English and French names Weymouth pine and *Pin du lord* respectively. No doubt the enthusiasm for its cultivation was connected to some extent with formal measures taken at that time to encourage just that – as its lightweight, durable wood was found to be particularly suitable for ships' masts. Despite this practicable promotion in Britain in that period however it is understood that white pine never gained significant popularity in the Country compared with that it achieved on the Continental mainland in Germany and France where large stands of the tree can still be found.

This soft whitish wood has been used for building interiors and for making furniture, toys and matches. It has also been used for making toys, and general woodenware

Medicinally, inner bark and tar have long been used in remedies for coughs, colds and burns. It has also been part of treatments for kidney and bladder disorders, some venereal diseases and rheumatism.