

# Vermont Tree Guide: Top 9 Species

Tree identification can be a daunting task. This guide is intended to help get you started by focusing on the top nine most common forest tree species in Vermont. Approximately 80% of all trees in Vermont are the following nine species. There are an additional 40 tree species that total the remaining 20%. Some species are more locally abundant than others, but this guide highlights the most distinguishing features of each species. If you would like to learn more about a particular species visit [go.uvm.edu/vermonttrees](http://go.uvm.edu/vermonttrees) for a short video and additional identifying characteristics.

## SUGAR MAPLE

*Acer saccharum*



**BRANCH PATTERN:** Opposite.

**LEAVES:** Five major points, no teeth or serrate margin. Dark green above, pale color below.

**BARK:** Brownish gray, can have a whitewashed appearance; never shaggy.

**HABITAT:** Forests with moist, well-drained soils.

**FUN FACT:** Vermont's State Tree!

## RED MAPLE

*Acer rubrum*



**BRANCH PATTERN:** Opposite.

**LEAVES:** Three major points, has serrate margin; green in summer and turns red in fall.

**BARK:** Bluish-gray, ranges from smooth to very shaggy.

**BUDS:** Round, red, found in clusters.

**HABITAT:** Wide range from dry to moist soils, low to high elevation.

## EASTERN HEMLOCK

*Tsuga canadensis*



**LEAVES:** Needles are flat, tapering, and rounded at the tip and grow in an irregular pattern. Two white stripes are found on the underside of each needle.

**BARK:** Gray-brown, relatively smooth; becomes cinnamon brown, with thick, ridges forming flat plates.

**CONES:** 3/4 inch long, oblong, light brown.

**HABITAT:** Often grows in shaded forest, very little understory vegetation.

For informational videos about each species, visit [go.uvm.edu/vermonttrees](http://go.uvm.edu/vermonttrees)

Illustrations by David More, from *Trees of Eastern North America*, by Gil Nelson, Christopher J. Earle, and Richard Spellenberg, Princeton University Press, 2014.

## EASTERN WHITE PINE

*Pinus strobus*



**LEAVES:** Long, slender needles (3-6 inches) in groups of 5.

**BARK:** Smooth, develops scales that form ridges.

**BRANCHES:** In whorls, circles the stem.

**HABITAT:** Pioneer species on old fields and other disturbed sites.

## YELLOW BIRCH

*Betula alleghaniensis*



**LEAVES:** Simple, double toothed edge.

**BARK:** Golden, metallic in color.

**TWIGS:** Taste/smells like wintergreen when a twig is broken.

**HABITAT:** Well and poorly drained sites, mixed with hardwood species.

## AMERICAN BEECH

*Fagus grandifolia*



**LEAVES:** Leaves have one tooth at the end of each vein.

**BARK:** Healthy bark is very smooth, gray; diseased bark is pockmarked.

**FRUIT:** Husk with hooked prickles encapsulates triangular nuts; important wildlife food source.

**HABITAT:** Shade tolerant, well drained sites.

## WHITE ASH

*Fraxinus americana*



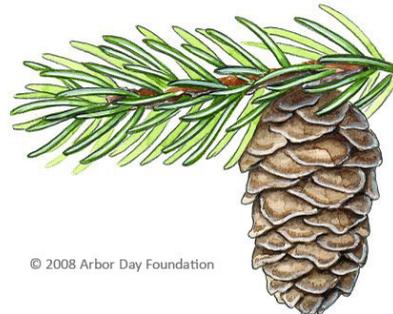
**LEAVES:** Opposite, compound, 5-7 leaflets.

**BARK:** Interlocking diamond pattern.

**HABITAT:** Well-drained soils, mixed hardwoods.

## RED SPRUCE

*Picea rubens*



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**LEAVES:** Spikey needles (1/2 inch long), angular in cross section.

**BARK:** Gray to reddish-brown, lacks resin blisters.

**HABITAT:** Both conifer and mixed woods forests.

## BALSAM FIR

*Abies balsamea*



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**LEAVES:** Needles are flat (3/4- 1 inch) attached to twig by a "suction cup".

**BARK:** Mottled, silver in color with resin blisters.

**HABITAT:** Shade tolerant, found in conifer forests.