

WHITE SPRUCE

Picea glauca (Moench) Voss

White or cat spruce occurs statewide except in Sagadahoc and York counties. It is widely distributed, but not as abundant as the red spruce. It grows on shallow, rocky sites from the coast to the tree line in the mountains and is also commonly found in old pastures or cleared land. It does not tolerate shade and does not grow as an understory tree. The long and rather thick branches, densely clothed with stout, rigid lateral branches, are curved upward and form a somewhat open, irregular head having a broad base. It commonly grows to a height of 60-90 feet and to a diameter of two feet.

The **bark** on old trees has light gray, plate-like scales which are thin, irregular, and with a somewhat brownish surface, light gray and smooth on younger trees.

The **leaves** on the lower side of the branches are often bent upward in such a manner as to bring them all on the upper side.

They are pale blue-green at first,

later becoming a dark blue-green. The foliage emits a peculiar and characteristic odor which offers a ready means of distinguishing it from the other species and is the reason for the alternate name. The **cones** are slender, cylindrical in shape, pale brown and shiny when ripe, and usually about two inches long. They ripen in August and September, and may be collected for seed until October. Cones usually fall off the first year. The cone scales are thin and flexible so that they give easily when the cone is clasped in the hand. The **twigs** are without hairs. The inner bark is silvery and glistens.

The **wood** is fairly light, soft, finishes well, and is moderately strong. It is used for pulp, paddles, oars, piano sounding boards, dimension lumber, and in limited amounts for Christmas trees. White and black spruce produce long, tough, pliable roots which were used by the Indians for tying together pieces of birch bark for canoes, and for various other purposes.

