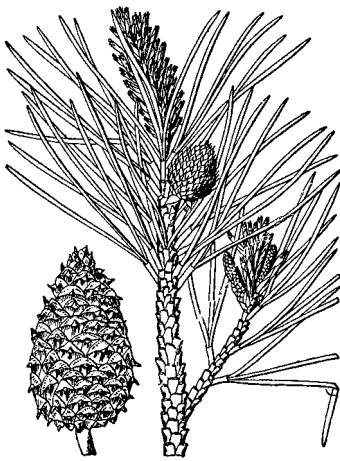




PITCH PINE *Pinus rigida* P. Mill.



Pitch pine wood is used for construction lumber, pulp and fire-starting “fat wood.”

Pitch pine grows on sandy barrens or plains, and on gravelly soil of the uplands. It is quite common in the southern part of the state, on the sand plains near Brunswick and Oxford and on Mt. Desert Island.

Branches are horizontal, rigid, contorted and form an open crown. Pitch pine attains a diameter of 1–2 feet, and a height of only 30–40 feet. The trunk tapers rapidly and generally is straight. Often the tree produces cones when small. It is the only native pine that will resprout when damaged by such factors as fire.

The **bark** is rough, even on young stems and branches. On old trees, it is irregularly divided into continuous broad flat ridges, and is deep gray or reddish-brown.

The **leaves** are in clusters of three, and are 3–5 inches long. They are dark yellow-green and stiff, standing at right angles to the branch.

The **cones** require 2 years to mature, are 1½–3½ inches long, borne





Pitch pine cones have a sharp prickle at the end of each scale.

on short, hardly-noticeable stalks, and are often produced in clusters. A sharp, rigid, curved prickle is produced on the tip of each scale. The cones open gradually during midwinter. Seeds are released over a period of several years. Cones often remain on the trees 10–12 years. Fresh cones are used in wreath decorations.

Pitch pine often has needles growing directly out of the trunk. This plus its clusters of 3 needles make it easy to recognize.

The **wood** is moderately heavy, strong, hard and stiff. It is used for construction lumber, pulp and fire-starting “fat wood.” In the past, considerable quantities of pitch and turpentine were obtained from this tree; these commodities were referred to as “naval stores,” a term originally applied to the resin-based components used in building and maintaining wooden sailing ships. Today naval stores are used in the manufacture of soap, paint, varnish, shoe polish, lubricants, linoleum and roofing material.



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Pitch Pine Circumference: 97" Height: 80' Crown Spread: 44' Location: Poland

