



NORTHERN WHITE CEDAR

Thuja occidentalis L.



Cedar has emerged as a viable alternative to pressure-treated wood.

Northern white cedar or eastern arborvitae is generally found in swamps, along streams, on mountain slopes and in old pastures where the soil is moist. Dense stands are widely distributed statewide. It is most abundant in the northern and eastern sections, and grows best on alkaline soils. It is widely used as an ornamental. The head is compact, narrow and pyramidal. The branches are horizontal, short and turned upward. Trees grow to 60 feet in height and to 3 feet in diameter. The trunk is often strongly buttressed.

The **bark** has shallow fissures, which divide it into flat narrow ridges. It is reddish-brown and often tinged with orange.

The **leaves** are opposite or two-ranked, usually only about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch long, scale-like, blunt, and so arranged as to make the small branches flat in





Northern white cedar cones are about 1/2 inch long and often occur in large numbers.

shape. They have a pleasant aroma and a rather pleasing taste, and are a major source of food for deer in the winter.

The **cones** are erect, small, about 1/2 inch long, with only a few pairs of scales. They mature in one season. The seed is small and winged.

The **wood** is soft and light, coarse-grained, brittle, has very durable heartwood and a fragrant odor. It is used primarily for shingles, slack cooperage (barrels for dry, semi-dry or solid products), poles, posts and rustic fencing; and it is sawed into lumber for hope chests (since the wood is said to repel moths), siding, canoes and boats. More recently, cedar has emerged as a viable alternative to pressure-treated wood. Naturally weather-resistant, it is used for decks, post and rail fencing, outdoor furniture, roof shakes, and pelt stretchers.

