



## WHITE SPRUCE *Picea glauca* (Moench) Voss



*The wood of the white spruce is used for pulp, paddles, oars, piano sounding boards and dimension lumber, while its cones are used to make decorative wreaths.*

**W**hite or cat spruce occurs statewide except in York county. It is widely distributed, but not as abundant as 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 and on 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 with a broad base. It commonly grows to a height of 60–90 feet and to a diameter of 2 feet.

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

The **leaves** point straight out from the branch. On the lower half of the twig the leaves 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 is a ready means of distinguishing it from the other spruce species and is the reason for the alternate name.

The **cones** are slender, cylindrical, pale brown and shiny when ripe, and usually about 2 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 and dimension lumber, while its cones are used to make decorative wreaths. It shouldn't, however, be used as a Christmas tree; when it is brought indoors, the reason for its nicknames—cat spruce and skunk

*White spruce cones are cylindrical and the scales can be easily broken apart. This distinguishes it from red and black spruce, which have globe or egg-shaped cones with stiff scales.*

spruce—become evident. White and black spruce produce long, tough, pliable roots which were used by American Indians to tie together pieces of birch bark for canoes and other purposes.

