

# Eastern White Cedar

*Thuja occidentalis*



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## Species Description

The Eastern White Cedar is an evergreen tree that grows, on average, to heights of 10-20 meters with diameters of 30-60 cm. It has flattened branches with small scale-like leaves (1-2 mm). The reddish-brown bark has characteristic narrow vertical lines that tend to peel. The small ovoid (egg-shaped) cones are 1 cm long, occur in clusters, and are yellow-green when immature and brown when mature.

**STATUS**

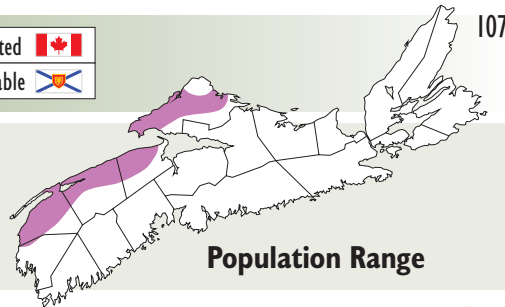
Not Listed



Vulnerable



Located in western Nova Scotia with an estimated population of 13,000-15,000 individuals.



**Population Range**

## Habitat

Found in riparian areas along streams, in swamps, along lakeshores, in woodland forests and in old pastures. It is shade-tolerant and typically occurs in cool, moist habitats that are nutrient rich. It does best in moderate drainage conditions that are neither too wet nor dry.



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Eastern White Cedar is typically observed in cool, moist shaded areas.

## Interesting Points

- Plays an important role in Mi'kmaw smudging ceremonies.
- Valued wood product due to its high decay resistance.
- The oldest known cedar in Nova Scotia is over 200 years old.
- Stunted cedars on the limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment are 700-1600 years old!
- Naturally resistant to insects and disease.
- Birds and mammals use it for



Seedling

© NS MUSEUM



Cedar branches

© LAWRENCE BENJAMIN

## Similar Species

### Eastern Hemlock:

Scaly brown to red-brown bark with wide grooves; short, flattened, shiny green leaves (10-20 mm long); ovoid cones (1.5-2.5 cm long), green to purple when immature and brown when mature; grows to heights of 30 m with trunk diameters of 60-90 cm.



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## Threats to Survival

- Historic population declines from land clearing for farms and urban areas.
- Habitat alteration (due to road building and forestry practices such as clearcutting).
- Browsing by deer and rabbits may damage seedlings.



© USDA

Unopened cones

## How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and report sightings. We can all contribute to recovery by not cutting down Eastern White Cedar trees. When managing woodlots containing cedars, avoid clearcutting and use alternative harvesting techniques. On Crown land cedars are not harvested.



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## Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

**Contact:** NS DNR (902) 679-6091

**Info:** [www.novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife](http://www.novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447, [www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings)