

Picea rubens



red spruce

Family	Pinaceae		
Origin	Native		
WIS Code	FAC	CoC	8



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DESCRIPTION

Evergreen tree (to 35 m tall) with a narrow cone-shaped crown, whorled branches, and reddish rough bark with irregular thin brown scales. Twigs and buds are orange-brown, with fine hairs along twigs, and lower branches spreading downward. Needles (leaves) (12 to 15 mm) are yellow-green to dark-green, 4-sided so that they roll easily between the finger and thumb, sharply pointed, and arise from a peg-like base (sterigma). The sterigma persists after needles fall, giving the denuded branches a rough texture.

POLLEN AND SEED CONES

May to June; October to November. Male cones are cylindrical, reddish turning yellow-brown when pollen is released. Young seed cones are purplish developing into woody cones (3 to 4.5 cm long) with smooth-edged, fan-shaped scales (widest near the tip), enclosing the developing seeds.

HABITAT

Seepage swamps, bogs, and forests at high elevations.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Picea abies, Norway spruce, is a non-native with larger cones 12 to 16 cm long (versus only 3 to 4.5 cm for *P. rubens*). Most branches droop conspicuously in mature trees. Young *Picea* trees are difficult to tell apart, but *Picea abies* twigs typically have few hairs, and the individual needles are flatter so they don't roll easily between the finger and thumb.



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Picea rubens seed cones



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Picea abies seed cones