



# Table of Contents

Western Hemlock .....	2
Eastern Hemlock .....	2
<b>The Tree</b> .....	2
<b>Common Names in Use</b> .....	2
<b>Growth Range</b> .....	2
<b>The Wood</b> .....	3
<b>Uses</b> .....	3
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	3

# Eastern Hemlock

## The Tree

Eastern Hemlock is usually 60 to 80 feet tall and has a trunk diameter of two to three feet. Much larger trees are occasionally found. It has an irregular crown, and the forest tree has a high clear trunk. The bark is thick and is a cinnamon-red with long fissures and broad ridges. This bark was a very important source of tannin before other tanning processes were developed. The needles are narrow, flat, barely over one-half inch long, and rounded or minutely notched at the end. They are dark green in color on the upper side and a lighter shade on the under surface. A singular characteristic of the Hemlock is that the terminal twig usually points northeastward. The purplish green cones are very small, from one-quarter to three-quarters of an inch long, and have very small seeds. This tree is the official State tree of Pennsylvania.

Eastern Hemlock cones and foliage

Eastern Hemlock tree bark

## Common Names in Use

- Eastern Hemlock (trade)
- Canada Hemlock (lit, and hort.)
- Canadian Hemlock (lit)
- Hemlock (Me., N.H., Vt., Mass., R.I., Conn., N.Y., N.J., Pa., Del., W. Va., Va., N.C., S.C., Ky., Wiss., Mich., Minn., Ohio., Ontario and trade)
- Hemlock Spruce (Vt., R.I., N.Y., Pa., N.Y., W. Va., N.C., S.C., England)
- Huron Pine (Mich., trade)
- New England Hemlock (lit)
- Oh-neh-tah "Greens on the stick" (N.Y., Indians)
- Pennsylvania White Hemlock (trade)
- Pine (Pa)
- Red Hemlock (W. Va.)
- Spruce (Pa, W. Va., N.C.)
- Spruce Pine (Pa., Del., Va., N.C., Ga.)
- Water Spruce (Ky.)
- White Hemlock (W. Va.)
- West Virginia Hemlock (trade)
- Wisconsin White Hemlock (trade)

## Growth Range

The growth range of Eastern Hemlock extends from central and eastern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan through the northeastern States and into Canada, and southward in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, northern Alabama and Georgia, northwestern tip of South Carolina, and western North Carolina. It develops best on moist slopes and in well drained valleys on good soils.

**Latin (group) name:** Tsuga

**Latin (specific) name:** Tsuga Canadensis (Linnaeus) Carriere

**Average max height:** 60' to 80'

**Average diameter:** 2' to 3'

**Associated state:** Pennsylvania

# Wood

Eastern Hemlock is a light buff to pale tan-brown with a reddish hue. The sapwood is usually not distinct from the heartwood. The wood is moderately light in weight, soft, coarse grained and splintery or twisted and uneven in texture. In working this wood much care is necessary as it splinters easily and it is difficult to finish smoothly. This wood dries easily but holds nails and screws very poorly.

Eastern Hemlock Coffee table by Winchester Woodcrafts

## Uses

Eastern Hemlock lumber is used for general construction, crating, boxes, railroad car construction and ties, sash, doors and general mill work. The peeled wood is used generally for paper pulp.

## Bibliography

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