

## ***SPECKLED ALDER***

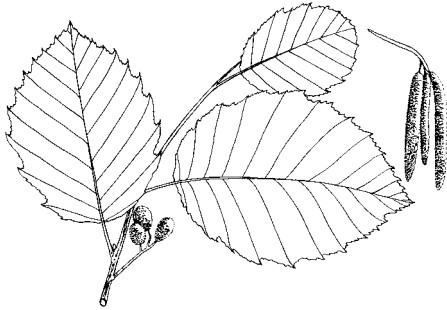
*Alnus incana ssp. rugosa* (Du Roi) Clausen

Speckled alder commonly occurs statewide, usually growing in wet areas along brooks, in swamps, and in pastures. It sprouts very readily and is a nuisance on pasture land. Alder usually occurs as a shrub, rarely as a small tree. It is seldom more than four inches in diameter and 20 feet in height.

The **bark** is smooth, dark chocolate brown, and marked with white elongated spots called lenticels.

The **leaves** are alternate, 2 - 3 inches long, usually broadly ovate, and the texture is rough or rugose as the scientific name implies.

The edges are unevenly or doubly toothed.



The **flowers** are in catkins, and open before the leaves in the spring. The

purplish, wax-like, male catkins are pre-formed the previous fall. The **fruit** is woody and cone-like, with a very short stalk.

The **winter buds** are short-stalked, maroon in color, with few scales showing. The **twigs** are reddish brown; the pith is triangular in cross section.

The **wood** is light and soft, and has very little commercial use. The wood discolors very rapidly on exposure to the air. Baskets for the florist industry are made from small diameter stems. In the past the wood was used in hand forges because of the intense heat it produced when burned.

Two other species, **Downy Green Alder** (*Alnus viridis* (Vill.) Lam. & DC. *spp. crispa* (ait.) Tirrill) and **Hazel Alder** (*Alnus serrulata* (Ait.) Willd.) occur as shrubs.