

Spruces - The Important Distinctions

		Black Spruce <i>Picea mariana</i>	Red Spruce <i>Picea rubens</i>	White Spruce <i>Picea glauca</i>
N E D L E S	Color	Blue - green.	Dark yellow-green.	Blue-green to dark green.
	Length	¼ - ½ inches.	½ - 5/8 inches.	1/3 - ¾ inches.
	Description	Dull with bloom.	Very shiny.	Dull, strong odor when crushed.
C O N E S	Length	½ - 1 ½ inches.	1 ¼ - 2 inches.	2 inches.
	Retention	Remain on tree many years.	Fall first year.	Fall first year.
	Shape	Spherical.	Wide in middle.	Cylindrical.
	Scales	Stiff and rigid when ripe; margin irregularly notched.	Stiff, with margin entire or slightly notched.	Flexible at maturity, margin entire.
T W I G S	Color	Yellow - brown to brown.	Reddish to orange-brown.	Light gray to yellow-brown.
	Hairs	Short rusty to black hairs; some hairs tipped with globose glands.	Short rusty to black hairs; tips lack glands.	Without hairs.

Seed of all spruce is winged; cones are pendent; bare twigs are roughened by persistent leaf bases.

Norway Spruce

Picea abies (L.) Karst.

Norway spruce is a native of Europe and is of great economic importance in its natural range. Here it is commonly planted both in forest plantations and as an ornamental tree. It rarely reproduces in the wild. It is very symmetrical and graceful in its growth habit, open grown trees often carrying branches clear to the ground. The tips of branches on larger trees have an upward sweep and lateral branchlets are long and pendent. Twigs are without hairs. Norway Spruce is a more rapid grower than any of our native species of spruce, and is a species frequently planted for pulpwood. It is occasionally used for lumber and as an ornamental. The leaves are about one inch long, sharp-pointed, glossy and dark green in color. The needles lack the tendency to bend upward on the twigs as in white spruce. Cones are cylindrical, 4-7 inches long with stiff, notched scales. They ripen from September to November but may be collected from September to April.