

PITCH PINE

Pinus rigida Mill.

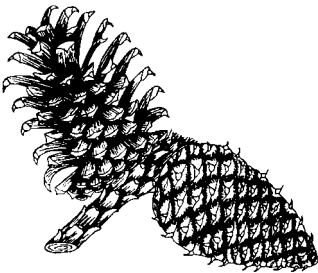
Pitch pine grows on sandy barrens or plains, and on gravely soil of the uplands. It is quite common in the southern part of the state, on the sand plains near Brunswick and Oxford, and on Mt. Desert Island. It is not found in Piscataquis, Aroostook, Somerset and Washington Counties.

Branches are horizontal, rigid, contorted, and form an open crown. Pitch pine attains a diameter of 1-2 feet, and a height of only 30-40 feet. The trunk tapers rapidly and generally is straight. Often the tree produces cones when small. It is the only native pine that will produce "sprout" growth when apparently killed by such factors as fire.

The **bark** is rough, even on young stems and branches. On old trees, it is irregularly divided into continuous broad flat ridges, and is deep gray or reddish brown in color.

The **leaves** are in clusters of 3, and are from 3-5 inches long. They are dark yellow-green, stiff, standing at right angles to the branch.

The **cones** require 2 years to mature, are 1½ - 3½ inches long, borne on short stalks, hardly noticeable, and are often produced in clusters. A sharp, rigid curved prickle is produced on the tip of each scale. The cones open gradually during mid-winter. Seeds are released over a period of several years. Cones often remain on the trees 10-12 years. Fresh cones are used in wreath decorations.



The **wood** is moderately heavy, strong, hard and stiff. It is used for construction lumber and pulp. At one time considerable quantities of tar and turpentine were obtained from this tree.