

TREES *of* BC

Western larch

(*Larix occidentalis*)



Bark

Mature trees develop thick, grooved plate-like bark with cinnamon-coloured scales similar to the Ponderosa pine.

Leaves

New needles are soft green, turning golden yellow in the fall, and broadly triangular in cross section. They are long, clustered in bunches of 15 to 30 on stubby, woody projections which remain on the twig after the needles fall.

Cones

Seed cones are elongated and red to reddish-brown. The scales have white hairs on the lower surface and prominent, long slender bracts. Pollen cones are yellow.

Habitat

Western larch grows at low to mid elevations in the southern interior and is found in mixed forests, but can occasionally be found in pure groups of trees after a severe wildfire. It demands full sunlight and grows well on fire-blackened soil. Fire releases nutrients which it uses to grow faster than its companion species. It is quite sensitive to frost damage because it continues to grow from bud-burst in spring through to September; most evergreen conifers stop growing in mid-July.

80 m



Tamarack

(*Larix laricina*)



Bark

Red-brown, thin, and scaly.

Leaves

Needles are three-sided and blue-green, turning bright yellow in autumn. They grow in clusters of 15 to 25 on short woody projections which remain on the twig after the needles fall.

Cones

The small, round seed cones are red at flowering and turn brown with age. Pollen cones are yellow.

Habitat

Tamarack is a northern species which grows mainly east of the Rockies and in a few isolated groups of trees in the Nechako Valley. It is usually found with Black spruce on poorly drained soils, bogs and swamps, and on cool, moist, north-facing slopes.

15 m



Subalpine larch

(*Larix lyallii*)



Bark

The bark is thin, deeply grooved, and flakes into reddish- to purplish-brown scales.

Leaves

Needles are soft bluish-green and turn golden in the fall. They are four-sided and grow in clusters of 30 to 40 on short, woody projections which remain on the twigs after the needles fall. The Subalpine larch has woolly hair on its buds and twigs.

Cones

The small, egg-shaped seed cones are reddish-yellow to purple when young. Between each scale of the cone there are prominent bracts. Pollen cones are yellow.

Habitat

Subalpine larch grows at high elevations in very cold, snowy areas, often on rocky, gravelly soils. It grows with Whitebark pine and Subalpine fir. Subalpine larch can also form pure groups of trees which provide a spectacular show of autumn colours.

15 m

