

Tamarack (*Larix laricina*)

The Tamarack is a slender-trunked, conical tree, that can grow 50-75 feet tall, with bright green, deciduous needles. The glossy needles appear in remarkably soft tufts in early spring. The Tamarack is a deciduous conifer, in contrast to most conifers, which retain their needles all year around. Instead, the Tamarack sheds its needles every year in the fall. The glossy needles appear in soft tufts in spring and are initially apple green in color, changing to blue-green as the season progresses. In late summer and early fall, the needles gradually change to a golden color and are then shed.

One of the northernmost trees, the hardy Tamarack is useful as an ornamental in very cold climates. Indians used the slender roots to sew together strips of the bark for their canoes and also used the wood to build snowshoes. In fact, Tamarack comes from the Algonquian word "akemantak" which means wood used for making snowshoes. The durable lumber is also used as framing for houses, railroad cross-ties, poles, and pulpwood. While this tree has many uses, it does not make a good tree for our local urban forest.