

American Larch

Larix laricina (Family: *Pinaceae*)

Description: *Larix laricina* is a large *deciduous* tree, native to Alaska, Canada and the Northeastern region of the United States. It is known for its yellow fall color and soft needles.

Hardiness: USDA hardiness zones (1) 2 to 4 or 5.

Natural Habitat: Northern North America, from the Arctic Circle in Alaska and Canada southwards to northern Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Illinois.

Mature Size: Height: 40' to 80', Spread: 15' to 30'

Form (Shape): Pyramidal. Branches spread horizontally, while branchlets droop. Open habit with a slender trunk.

Growth Rate: Slow to medium.

Foliage: Needles are .75-1.25" long, and 3 sided. Grown on short spurs, carrying 12-30 needles in one bundle. Needles have 2 stomatal bands underneath. Foliage is a bright blue-green in the summer, then turns yellow in the fall.

Texture: Medium fine with foliage, coarse in winter.

Flowers: Monoecious and sessile. The staminate is yellow, and the pistillate is rosy in color.

Fruit: Produces small cones that are oval, .5-1" long and .25-.5" wide. Cones are glabrous and green or violet when young, maturing to brown.

Light: Full sun, intolerant of shade.

Soil: Moist, well-drained, acidic soils.

Propagation: Seeds will germinate with no pretreatment, though can benefit from a stratification of 30-60 days at 30-41°F. Cuttings are difficult to root. Cultivars can be grafted.

Failure Patterns: Susceptible to Eastern Larch Beetle.

Disease and Insects: Prone to larch case bearer, larch sawfly, wood rot, and rust fungi.

Landscape Use: Best in groves and areas of high moisture.

Availability: Available in retail nurseries.