



Maine Department of Conservation
Natural Areas Program

Chamaecyparis thyoides (L.) B.S.P.

Atlantic White-cedar

- Habitat:** Swamps. [Forested wetland]
- Range:** Mississippi and southern Florida, north to southern Maine and west to southeastern New York.
- Phenology:** Monoecious, but staminate and pistillate flowers are produced on separate shoots. Flowers in late spring and fruits in mid-autumn.
- Family:** Cupressaceae

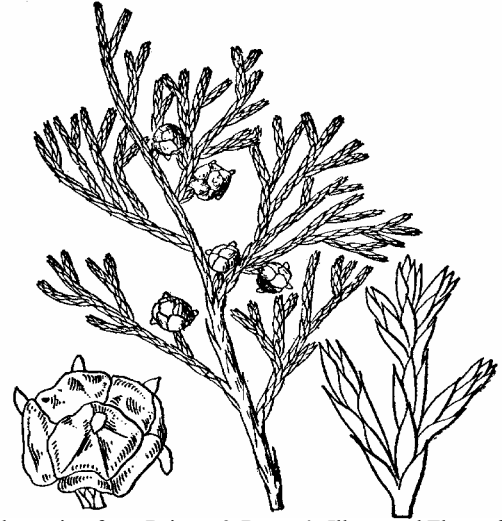


Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

Aids to Identification: Atlantic white cedar is an evergreen tree, up to 25 m high, with small, scale-like leaves and characteristic cedar fragrance. Atlantic white cedar can be distinguished from northern white cedar, which is common and widespread in Maine, because the branchlets bearing the leaves are rounded, not flattened; by the bluish-green color of the foliage (as opposed to the yellowish-green of northern white cedar); and by the fruits which are small and spherical rather than elongate.

Ecological characteristics: Grows in swamps, bogs, and fens chiefly on the coastal plains. In a typical Atlantic white cedar swamp, Atlantic white cedar forms a dense canopy that allows little light penetration and limits understory growth. Since Atlantic white cedar seedlings are relatively intolerant of shade, some forms of disturbance may be required to regenerate Atlantic white cedar.

Synonyms:

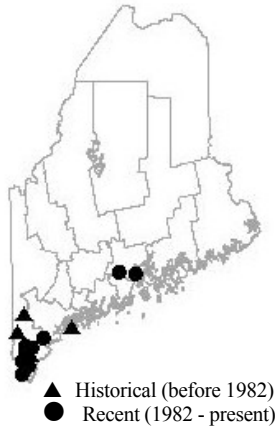
Rarity of *Chamaecyparis thyoides*

State Rank:	S2	Imperiled in Maine because of rarity or vulnerability to further decline.
New England Rank:	None	
Global Rank:	G4	Widespread, abundant, and apparently secure globally, but with cause for long-term concern.

Status of *Chamaecyparis thyoides*

Federal Status:	None	No Federal Status.
State Status:	Special Concern	
Proposed State Status:	Special Concern	Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be considered Threatened or Endangered.

Known Distribution in Maine:



This rare plant has been documented from a total of 12 town(s) in the following county(ies): Cumberland, Knox, Oxford, Waldo, York.

Dates of documented observations are: 1933, 1977 (4), 1981, 1984, 1985, 1989 (7), 1996 (5), 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 (2)

Reason(s) for rarity:

At northern limit of range; also habitat loss or repeated logging.

Conservation considerations:

In the few large occurrences in Maine (i.e. more than ten acres of *Chamaecyparis*-dominated wetland), the species has regenerated well after previous harvests. Small populations would be less likely to regenerate. Conservation might, however, best be addressed to the overall community (Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, for example) as an ecological unit, allowing natural processes to dominate. Managers first need to consider whether it is the individual trees or the integrated forest community that is of interest.

The information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 12 MAY 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species,
please contact the Natural Areas Program
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

