

State
Tree
of

PENNSYLVANIA

Eastern hemlock

Tsuga canadensis

In 1896, the "Father of Pennsylvania Forestry," Dr. Joseph T. Rothrock, stated, "If Pennsylvania were to select one tree as characteristic of our state, nothing would be better than the hemlock." The Pennsylvania legislature designated Eastern hemlock the official state tree on June 22, 1931.

Eastern hemlock thrives in cool, moist sites. It occupies steep north or east facing slopes in southern counties. Farther north, it forms nearly pure stands in ravines, stream valleys and wooded swamps. *Tsuga canadensis* grows with white pine, American beech, maples, oaks and birches in a variety of forest types. Rhododendron, witch-hazel and viburnums often form the shrub layer beneath the hemlock's branches. Canada mayflower, partridge-berry, clubmoss and ferns populate the forest floor nearby.

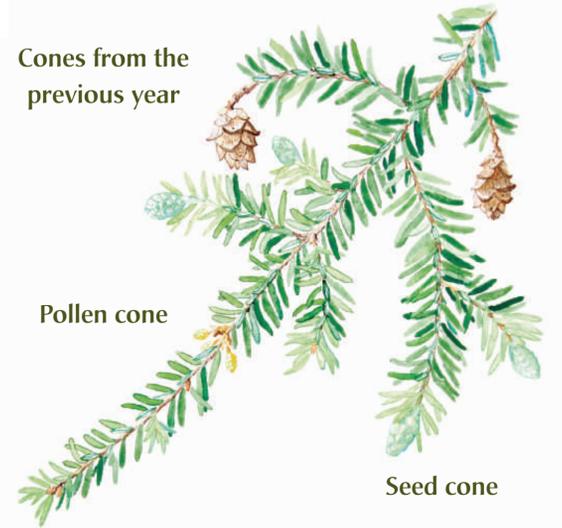
Eastern hemlock is a large, long-lived conifer. Trees more than 400 years old, reaching heights of 140 feet, greeted the settlers of colonial Pennsylvania. The current state champion hemlock stands in Cook Forest State Park. It rises 125 feet with a diameter of 5 feet 1 inch and a spread of 70 feet.

Over the centuries hemlock has been a major contributor to the state's economy. At the peak of production in the 1890s Pennsylvania's forests yielded more than a billion board feet of hemlock lumber each year for beams, weather boarding, shingles and other rough construction. Massive quantities of hemlock bark provided tannic acid to process hides for harness, saddles, belts and shoes. Known for its rot resistance, hemlock is often used today for railroad ties and barn siding.

Hemlock trees provide much more than wood. Their dense evergreen branches provide shelter for Blackburnian warblers, blue-headed vireo, Acadian flycatcher and other forest songbirds. Their deep shade keeps streams cool, providing the cold-water aquatic habitat favored by native brook trout. Red squirrels, black-capped chickadees, crossbills and pine siskins consume large quantities of hemlock seed.



Cones from the
previous year



Pollen cone

Seed cone



Pollen cones
form mid
branch

Seed cones
form at the
branch tips



Seeds fall
from cones in
early winter

This priceless component of Penn's Woods is threatened by the hemlock woolly adelgid – a tiny insect that feeds on the hemlock's sap, causing the needles, branches and eventually the entire tree to die. Pennsylvania's Bureau of Forestry is working to protect the hemlock from this invasive pest.

The graceful Eastern hemlock is an excellent subject for ornamental planting. Many consider hemlock among the most picturesque and beautiful of the world's evergreens and nurseries have developed hundreds of varieties for ornamental planting.

The Eastern hemlock helps define "Penn's Woods" and is an important part of the state's history. Visitors can experience the majestic power of 300-400 year old hemlocks in old growth stands conserved in State Forest Natural Areas or while hiking the "Forest Cathedral" trails in Cook Forest State Park. Learn more about conserving hemlocks and the forests in which they grow – visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry or www.iConservePA.org.



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PENNSYLVANIA



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