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Abies balsamea

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(Redirected from [Balsam fir](#))

The **balsam fir**

(*Abies*

balsamea)

is a [North American fir](#), native to most of eastern and central [Canada](#)

([Newfoundland](#) west to

central [Alberta](#)) and the

northeastern [United States](#)

([Minnesota](#) east to [Maine](#),

and south in the [Appalachian](#)

[Mountains to West](#)

[Virginia](#)).^[1]

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Growth [edit]

Balsam fir



Tree with cones

Conservation status



Least Concern (IUCN 2.3)

Scientific classification

Kingdom: [Plantae](#)

Division: [Pinophyta](#)

Class: [Pinopsida](#)

Order: [Pinales](#)

Family: [Pinaceae](#)

Genus: *[Abies](#)*

Species: *A. balsamea*

Binomial name

Abies balsamea

(L.) Mill.

- Norsk (bokmål)
- Polski
- Русский
- Slovenščina
- Suomi
- Svenska



Range



Foliage

It is a small to medium-size [evergreen tree](#) typically 14–20 metres (46–66 ft) tall, rarely to 27 metres (89 ft) tall, with a narrow conic crown. The [bark](#) on young trees is smooth, grey, and with [resin](#) blisters (which tend to spray when ruptured), becoming rough and fissured or scaly

on old trees. The [leaves](#) are flat needle-like, 15 to 30 millimetres (1⁄2–1 in) long, dark green above often with a small patch of [stomata](#) near the tip, and two white stomatal bands below, and a slightly notched tip. They are arranged spirally on the shoot, but with the leaf bases twisted to appear in two more-or-less horizontal rows. The [cones](#) are erect, 40 to 80 millimetres (11⁄2–3 in) long, dark purple, ripening brown and disintegrating to release the winged [seeds](#) in September.

Variety

[\[edit\]](#)

There are two varieties:

- Abies balsamea* var. *balsamea* (balsam fir) - bract scales short, not visible on the closed cones. Most of the species' range.
- Abies balsamea* var. *phanerolepis* (bracted balsam fir or Canaan fir) - bract scales longer, visible on the closed cone. The southeast of the species' range, from southernmost [Quebec](#) to [West Virginia](#). The name 'Canaan Fir' derives from one of its native localities, the [Canaan Valley](#) in West Virginia. Some

botanists regard this variety as a natural hybrid between balsam fir and Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*), which occurs further south in the Appalachian mountains.

Ecology [edit]

On mountain tops, stands of balsam fir occasionally develop *fir waves*. Often found in association with *black spruce*, *white spruce* and *trembling aspen*.

This tree provides food for moose, *American red squirrels*, *crossbills* and *chickadees*, as well as shelter for moose, *snowshoe hares*, *white-tailed deer*, *ruffed grouse* and other small mammals and songbirds. The needles are eaten by some *lepidopteran* caterpillars, for example the *lo moth* (*Automeris io*).

Uses [edit]

The *resin* is used to produce *Canada balsam*, and was traditionally used as a *cold* remedy and as a *glue* for glasses, optical instrument components, and for preparing permanent mounts of microscope specimens. The *wood* is used for *paper* manufacture and is also a popular *Christmas tree*.

Balsam fir oil is an EPA approved non-toxic rodent repellent.^[2]

Tree emblem [edit]

The balsam fir is the *Provincial tree* of *New Brunswick*.

References [edit]

- ↑ "PLANTS Profile for Abies balsamea (balsam fir)". http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=ABBA. Retrieved 2007-07-17.
 - ↑ http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/biopesticides/ingredients/factsheet/factsheet_129035.htm
- Conifer Specialist Group (1998). *Abies balsamea*. 2006. *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. IUCN 2006. Retrieved on 12 May 2006.
 - Gymnosperm Database: *Abies balsamea*
 - Flora of North America
 - Karen Legacy, Shayna LaBelle-Beadman & Brenda Chambers.



Forest Plants of

Northeastern Ontario

Lone Pine Publishing / Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1995.

External links

[[edit](#)]

- [Winter ID picture](#)
- [Compiled image](#)



Categories: [IUCN Red List least concern species](#) | [Abies](#) | [Trees of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) | [Trees of the United States](#) | [Trees of Canada](#) | [Trees of Michigan](#) | [Trees of Saskatchewan](#) | [Trees of Northeastern United States](#) | [Medicinal plants](#) | [Provincial symbols of New Brunswick](#) | [Trees of humid continental climate](#) | [Least concern plants](#)



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