

White Pine
Pinus strobus





TREE OF THE MONTH

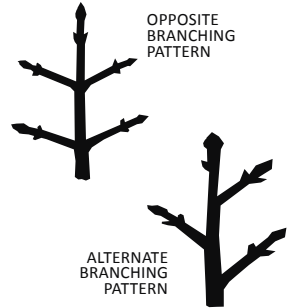
White Pine • *Pinus strobus*

ALSO KNOWN AS: EASTERN WHITE PINE, NORTHERN WHITE PINE, WEYMOUTH PINE

White pine (*Pinus strobus*) is known for its dark brown, scaly bark on fast-growing trees throughout our woods. In the right light, white pine trunks can look purple or even blue compared to the other trees around them. At a distance, white pines' clusters of long needles make the tree appear tufted and fluffy.

Notable for their long needles that are most commonly found in bunches of five (but also sometime bunches of three) white pine is the only five-needle pine native to North America. The Onondaga Nation tells of how, long ago, the great Peacemaker gathered the chiefs of five warring Haudenosaunee nations together on the banks of Onondaga Lake. There, he joined them in one mind before the ancient white pine. The Peacemaker lifted the tree with one hand and the chiefs threw their weapons under the pine's roots. White pine's bundles of five needles represent the Five Nations that the Peacemaker brought together that day. The Nations swore to 'live by the Great Law of Peace, which sets out right relations among peoples and with the natural world.'

White pine is one of the most commonly used and valuable timber trees in North America. Early European colonists prized white pine for the huge, straight trunks found in stands that could be up to 450 years old. These trees were extolled for their 'infinite store' of wood and the English Crown reserved pines for the King. The oldest, straightest trees were reserved for battleship masts.



White pine has an irregular branching pattern, often called 'whorled.' This means that white pine branches sprout from the trunk or branches irregularly around the circumference.

White pine buds are reddish brown and narrow with long, sharp, pointed scales that overlap.

Many species call white pines home, including birds like the red crossbill, small mammals, and squirrels.



Tree of the Month is a collaboration between BEAT, the City of Pittsfield, Pittsfield Tree Watch, and the MA Department of Conservation & Recreation's Greening the Gateway Cities Program. Find out more at thebeatnews.org.