

Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

Northern hardwood forest

Dominant trees usually include *Fagus grandifolia* (American beech), *Acer rubrum* (red maple), *A. saccharum* (sugar maple), *Prunus serotina* (wild black cherry)—at less than 40% relative cover, *Betula lenta* (sweet birch), *B. alleghaniensis* (yellow birch), *B. papyrifera* (paper birch), *Q. rubra* (northern red oak), and *Fraxinus americana* (white ash). This type may contain scattered *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine) and/or *Tsuga canadensis* (eastern hemlock), but combined conifer cover does not exceed 25% of the canopy. *Rhododendron maximum* (rosebay) may be locally abundant. Other common shrubs include *Hamamelis virginiana* (witch-hazel), *Acer pensylvanicum* (moose-wood), *Viburnum lantanoides* (witch-hobble), *Ilex montana* (mountain holly), *Amelanchier laevis* (smooth serviceberry), *A. arborea* (shadbush), and *Carpinus caroliniana* (hornbeam). The herbaceous layer is generally sparse and reflects a northern affinity; common components include *Maianthemum canadense* (Canada mayflower), *Trientalis borealis* (starflower), *Thelypteris novaboracensis* (New York fern), *Dryopteris carthusiana* (fancy fern), *Lycopodium lucidulum* (shining clubmoss), *Gaultheria procumbens* (teaberry), *Mitchella repens* (partridge-berry), *Aralia nudicaulis* (wild sarsaparilla), *Medeola virginiana* (Indian cucumber-root), and *Maianthemum canadense* (Canada mayflower).

Related types: If combined relative cover by conifers exceeds 25%, please read description for the "Hemlock (white pine) - northern hardwood forest." If cover by *Prunus serotina* (wild black cherry) exceeds 40% of canopy, please read description for the "Black cherry - northern hardwood forest" type.

Range: Glaciated NE, Glaciated NW, Pocono Plateau, Unglaciated Allegheny Plateau.

Selected references: Braun 1950, Illick and Frontz 1928, Lindsey and Escobar 1976.

[**Crosswalk:** Smith's "Northern Hardwood (Broadleaf) Forest," TNC's *Acer saccharum* - *Betula alleghaniensis* - *Fagus grandifolia* Forest Alliance, SAF's Sugar maple - beech - yellow birch (24).]