

Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

Black spruce - tamarack palustrine woodland

This is a peatland community type that occurs in both glaciated and non-glaciated areas. Tree cover totals between 10% and 60%. *Picea mariana* (black spruce) and *Larix laricina* (tamarack) are usually both present in some amount, at least one dominating or co-dominating the tree stratum. Other trees commonly include *Abies balsamea* (balsam fir), *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine), *Tsuga canadensis* (eastern hemlock), and *Acer rubrum* (red maple). Shrubs include *Chamaedaphne calyculata* (leatherleaf), *Kalmia angustifolia* (sheep laurel), *Alnus incana* (speckled alder), *Aronia melanocarpa* (black chokeberry), *Vaccinium myrtilloides* (velvet-leaf berry), *V. corymbosum* (highbush blueberry), *Ledum groenlandicum*^S (Labrador tea), *Rhododendron viscosum* (swamp azalea), *Kalmia polifolia* (bog laurel), *V. macrocarpon* (cranberry), and *Nemopanthus mucronatus* (mountain holly). Herbs include *Rhynchospora alba* (white beak-rush), *Thelypteris palustris* (marsh fern), *Drosera intermedia* (spatulate-leaved sundew), *D. rotundifolia* (round-leaved sundew), *Sarracenia purpurea* (pitcher-plant), *Eriophorum virginicum* (tawny cotton-grass), *E. uaginatum* spp. *spissum* (cotton-grass), *Carex canescens* (a sedge), *C. trisperma* (a sedge), and *C. folliculata* (a sedge). The bryophyte layer is well developed and dominated by sphagnum. This community type may occur as part of the "Acidic glacial peatland complex."

Related types: This type is closely related to the "Black spruce - tamarack peatland forest" type, which may accompany it. The distinction between the two is the percent canopy cover; the forested type typically has greater than 60% cover by trees, the woodland type less.

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

Selected references: Crum 1992, PNDI field surveys.

[Crosswalk: Smith's "Non-Glacial Bog" (in part), "Oligotrophic Kettlehole Bog" (in part), TNC's *Picea mariana* Saturated Woodland Alliance, *Picea mariana* / *Ledum groenlandicum* / *Sphagnum* spp. Community, SAF's Black spruce - tamarack (13).]