

Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

Red spruce rocky summit

This type is known in the state from only one example, in Wyoming County, Northeastern Pennsylvania. The site is north-facing on fractured bedrock at an elevation of about 2200 ft. Woody species occur in pockets of soil that have accumulated in cracks in the bedrock. There are extensive areas of bare or lichen-encrusted rock. Aside from *Picea rubens* (red spruce), tree species include *Betula populifolia* (gray birch), *Pinus rigida* (pitch pine), *P. resinosa* (red pine), *P. strobus* (eastern white pine), *Tsuga canadensis* (eastern hemlock), and *Acer rubrum* (red maple). Trees are small in stature and shaped by exposure to wind and ice. Shrubs include *Gaylussacia baccata* (black huckleberry), *Vaccinium pallidum* (lowbush blueberry), *Aronia melanocarpa* (black chokeberry), *Sorbus americana* (American mountain-ash), *Ilex montana* (mountain holly), and *Kalmia angustifolia* (sheep laurel). Herbaceous species include *Carex pennsylvanica* (Pennsylvania sedge), *Carex communis* (a sedge), *Deschampsia flexuosa* (common hairgrass), *Maianthemum canadense* (Canada mayflower), and *Melampyrum lineare* (cow-wheat). *Cladonia* spp and *Cladina* spp. (reindeer lichens), and crustose lichens are abundant. This community type is part of the "Ridgetop acidic barrens complex."

Related types: The Pennsylvania example of this community type lacks the fir component of spruce balds found both farther north in the Adirondacks (balsam fir), and farther south in the Blue Ridge (Fraser fir).

Range: Glaciated NE.

Selected references: PNDI field surveys.

[**Crosswalk:** TNC's *Picea rubens* Woodland Alliance, *Picea rubens* — *Vaccinium angustifolium* Community, SAF's Red spruce (32).]