

Black Spruce

Picea mariana

Height: up to 15 meters

Diameter: 10-30 centimetres

Distinguishing feature: Short uppermost branches clustered to form “crow’s nest”

USES

Historical-

The Chipewyan used the bark to make shingles for the roofs of log cabins. Black spruce was especially important for trapping and the fur trade; saplings were used to create snares and metal traps were boiled with a mixture of spruce branches, alder twigs and bee’s wax to remove human scent.

Commercial-

Black spruce wood is used to make pulp, newsprint, fine papers and Kraft paper. The cellulose from this tree is used in the making of sausage casings, explosives and imitation leather.

Natural -

Black spruce grows in cold, poorly-drained, nutrient-poor sites such as bogs and fens. Some naturalists say that the top bulb of branches –the crow’s nest- results from red squirrels clipping off cone laden branches close to the top of the tree.

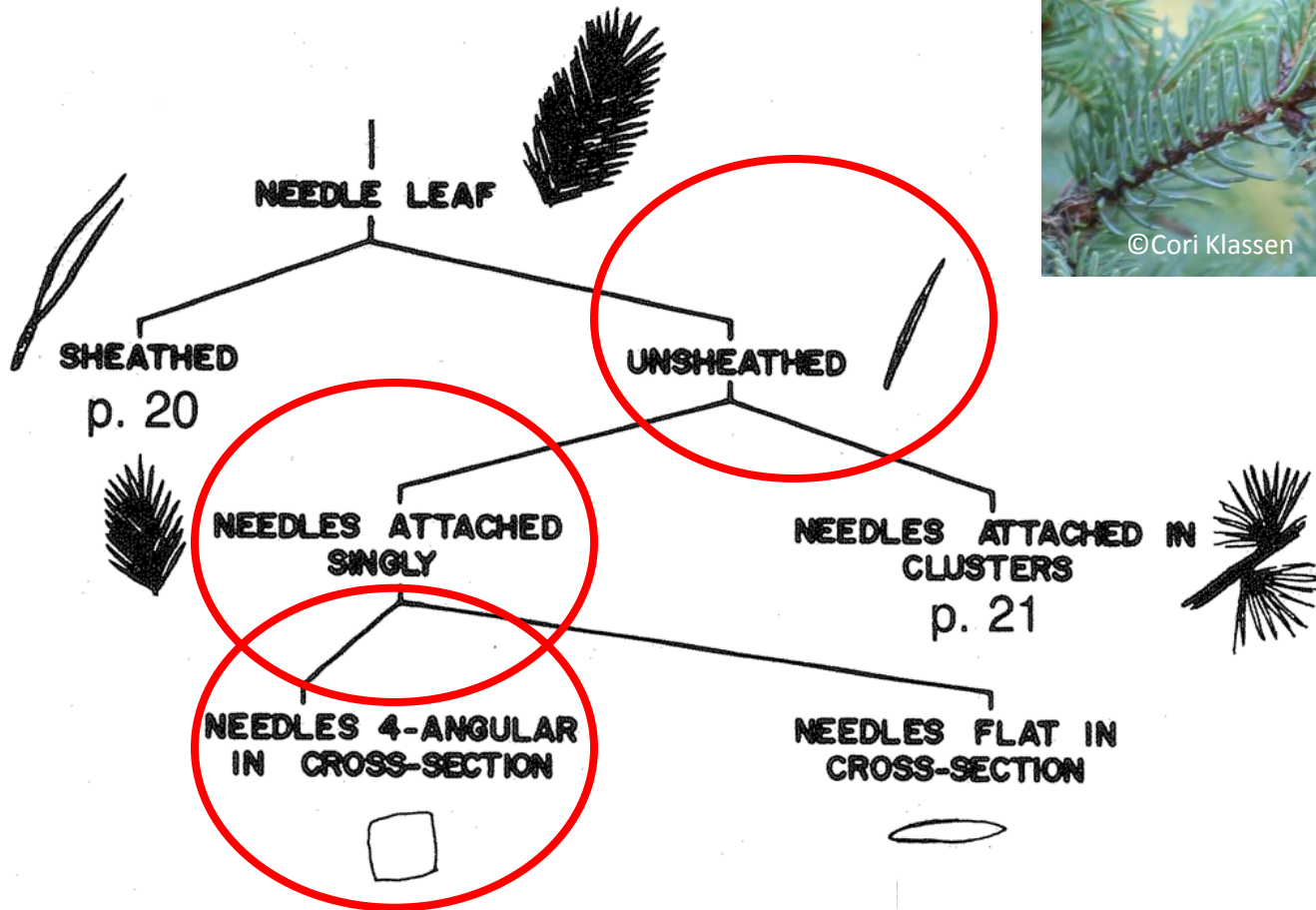
Medicinal-

Bits of dry rotted spruce wood was wrapped in a piece of caribou hide and pounded to a fine baby powder. The powder was used to prevent chafing and acted as a deodorant.



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Identification



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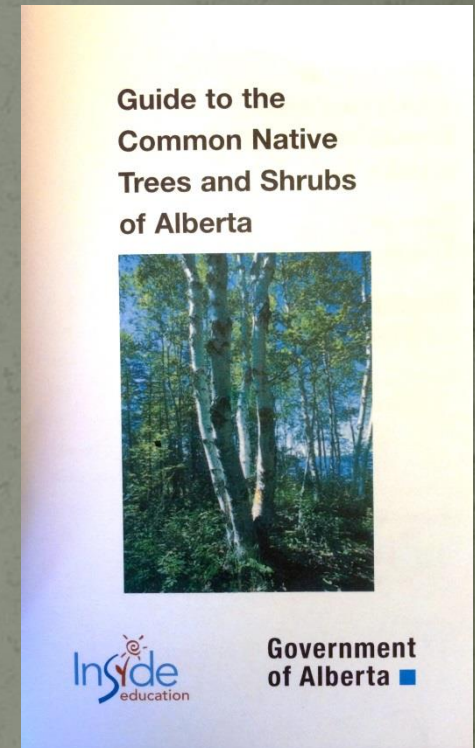
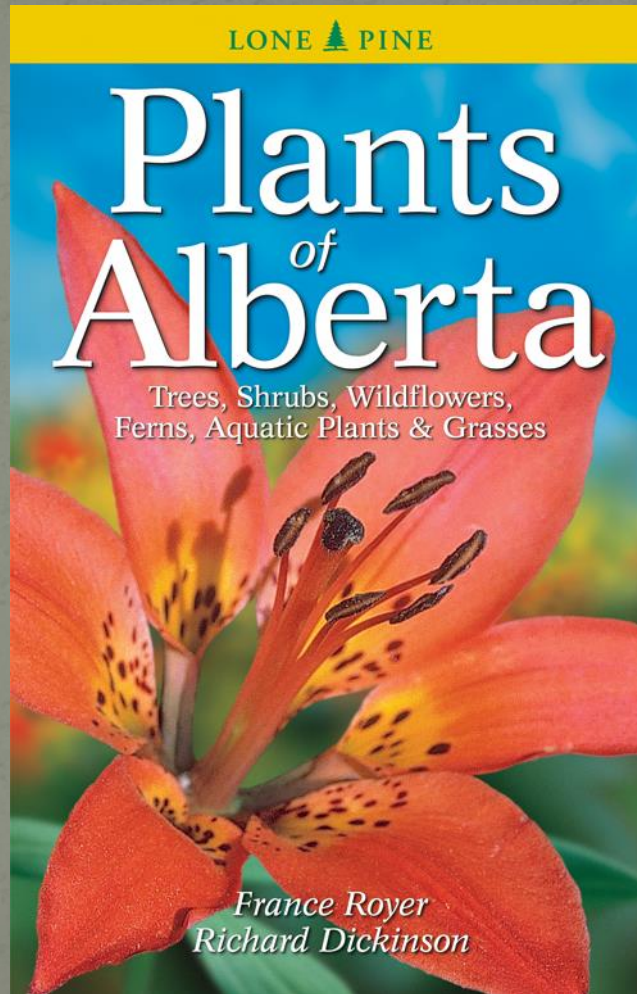
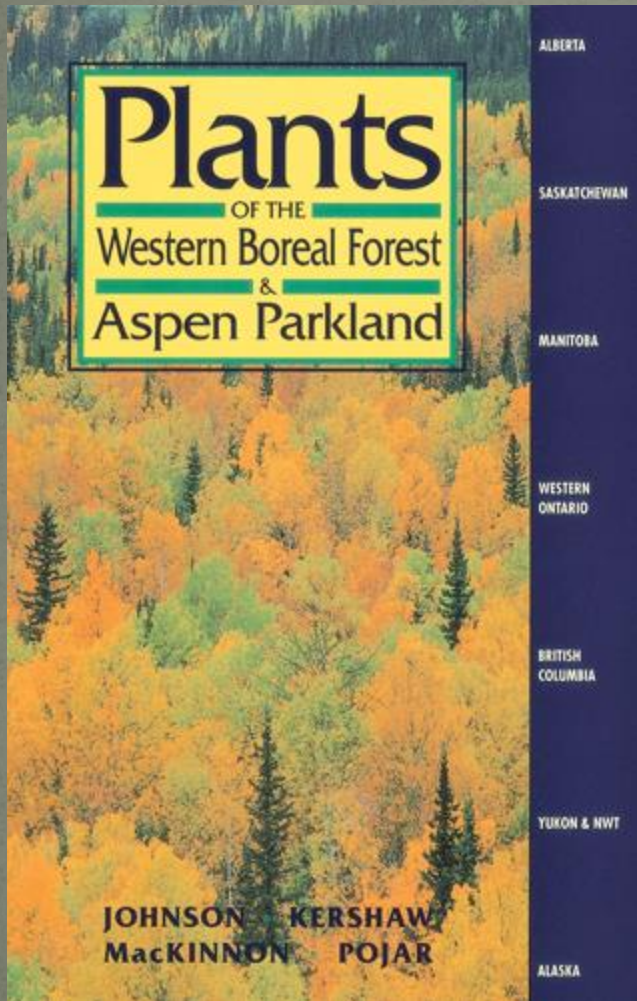
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