



Common name: **Eastern redcedar**

Genus Species: *Juniperus virginiana*



Photo credit: Celia Cuomo, mohonkpreserve.org

**Description:** Eastern redcedar is an evergreen conifer shrub or tree growing 30 to 70 feet tall. Male cones and female cones occur on separate trees. The small male cones bear pollen, and the slightly larger female cones become berry-like in maturity.

**Habitats:** Eastern redcedar occurs on a wide range of soils and in many growing conditions, from swamps to dry, rocky glades. It is widely used in windbreaks and wildlife plantings.

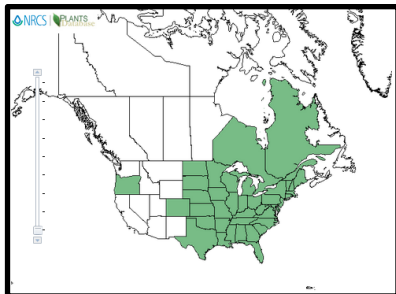
**Phenology highlight:** The male pollen cones, found at the tips of twigs, and the young female seed cones, found among the needles or scales, are small springtime gems that reward the most careful observers.

### Species facts

- Eastern redcedar is wind-pollinated.
- The cedar waxwing is one of the principal users of redcedar berries, though these fruits are also an important part of the diet of numerous other birds and mammals.
- Eastern redcedar is a favored nesting tree for chipping sparrows, robins, song sparrows, and mockingbirds.
- Native Americans used redcedar for medicine to treat respiratory ailments, aid in childbirth, and treat other conditions. The wood was used for lance shafts, bows, flutes, and other items.



Photo credit: Hallie Schwab, mohonkpreserve.org



Map credit: USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database <http://plants.usda.gov>, 28 August 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA

**Why observe this species?** Eastern redcedar is a USA-NPN calibration plant species. Calibration species have broad distributions and are ecologically or economically important. The NPN integrates observations on calibration species to get "the big picture" of plant responses to climate change across the nation. In addition, this species is an allergen. Observations on its phenology provide valuable information to people with allergies and the public health community.

**Tip for observing this species:** "Pollen release" should be reported only if you can actually see pollen dust upon blowing or shaking a pollen cone.

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website ([www.nyphenologyproject.org](http://www.nyphenologyproject.org)) and the USA-NPN website ([www.usanpn.org](http://www.usanpn.org)).



## Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

**Note:** pollen cone phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase; for example, if you record **Y** for "pollen release" and/or "open pollen cones" you should also record **Y** for "pollen cones"



Celia Cuomo  
mohonkpreserve.org

**Pollen cones** One or more fresh male pollen cones (strobili) are visible. Cones have overlapping scales that are initially tightly closed. Include unopened and open cones, but not wilted or dried cones that already released their pollen.



Celia Cuomo  
mohonkpreserve.org

**Open pollen cones** One or more open fresh male pollen cones (strobili) are visible. Cones are "open" when the scales have spread apart to release pollen. Do not include wilted or dried cones that have already released their pollen.

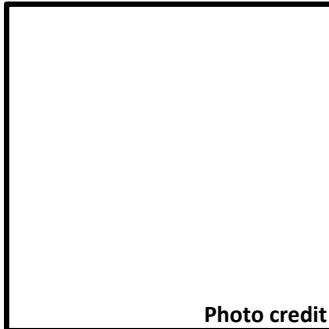


Photo credit

**Pollen release** One or more male cones (strobili) on the plant release visible pollen grains into your palm or onto a dark surface when gently shaken or blown.



Kerissa Battle  
communitygreenways.org

**Unripe seed cones** One or more unripe, female seed cones are visible on the plant. For eastern redcedar, an unripe seed cone is berry-like and green.



Keith Kanoti  
Maine Forest Service  
Bugwood.org

**Ripe seed cones** One or more ripe, female seed cones are visible. For eastern redcedar, a berry-like seed cone is ripe when it has turned dark blue, purple or brownish blue. Ripe seed cones are often covered with a whitish film that rubs off.



Photo credit

**Recent cone or seed drop** One or more seed cones or seeds have dropped or been removed from the plant since your last visit. Do not include empty seed cones that remain on the plant.



Celia Cuomo  
mohonkpreserve.org

**Phenology surprises** Phenology observers often come upon surprises while out in the field. This exuvia (photo), also called a "shell" or cicada ghost, remained in an eastern redcedar after a 17-year cicada adult had emerged from it.



Photo credit

**Why is pollen release an important phenophase?** While you should be able to see pollen release from almost all plant species when male or bisexual flowers are shaken, NPN currently only includes this phenophase for species that are moderate to severe allergens.

*All phenophases pictured here.*