

Red Cedar

(Juniperus virginiana)

Red Cedar, also known by the common names Eastern Red Cedar and Red Cedar Juniper, is found throughout the eastern two-thirds of the US, as well as in Oregon. Although not a commercially valued tree, its wood is treasured due to its beauty, durability and workability. It is the most widely distributed conifer (cone-producing) of tree size in the eastern US. Red Cedar is commonly seen along fence rows and along highway fence lines. This is the natural distribution of the seeds that are a result of birds having eaten the berry fruit and then sown the seeds in their droppings. Red Cedar trees can vary greatly in size, from 6 – 100 feet tall.

The “flower” of Red Cedar is actually a “conelet”, a variation of a pine cone, which forms at the end of branches. They first appear in late summer or early fall as light green in color, but change very little over the winter. In early spring, as early as late February, the conelets, now brownish in color (see photo above left) will split and discharge their pollen. The pollination may only last a few days on any given plant, but taken together the plants can pollinate over 2 - 3 weeks.

While Red Cedar does not produce as much pollen as its infamous relative Mountain Cedar, Red Cedar should be considered a significant cause of allergy and asthma where it occurs.

