PLANT FACT SHEET

Larix occidentalis Nutt.

GENUS *Larix* **FAMILY** Pinaceae

COMMON NAMES Western Larch

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Gum, Manna

The gum is used in the food industry as a substitute for gum arabic.
It is also chewed. It is collected from the soft layer under the bark.

DESCRIPTION

Very large trees. They can be 70 m high and 200 cm across the trunk. The bark is reddish-brown and scaly. It becomes thick and deeply cracked into flat, flaky ridges with age. The trunk usually does not have branches for most of its length. The leaves are flattened above and have a keel below. They are triangular in cross section. They are 3-5 cm long and shiny pale green. There are 15-30 leaves per tuft. The seed cones are 3-5 cm long and reddish-brown. They are hairy on the lower side. There are about 30 scales. The tips curve towards the base of the cone when open. The bract tip extends beyond the scale. Seed are 5 mm long. The wing is 8 mm long.

HABITAT

In Canada it grows between 400-1500 m altitude. It grows on deep, well drained soils. It suits hardiness zones 3-9.

PRODUCTION

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seed production begins are 15-25 years and is abundant for 50 years. It can continue to 200 years. Seeds are produced in most years but are more abundant every 4-5 years. Trees can live for 400 years.
A tree can produce 4 litres of liquid once or twice a year. This is then evaporated to give a thick syrup.

NOTES

There are 10 to 14 Larix species.

REFERENCES

Beckstrom-Sternberg, Stephen M., and James A. Duke. "The Foodplant Database." http://probe.nalusda.gov:8300/cgi-bin/browse/foodplantdb. (ACEDB version 4.0 - data version July 1994)

Brickell, C. (Ed.), 1999, The Royal Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. Convent Garden Books. p 593

Brown, D., 2002, The Royal Horticultural Society encyclopedia of Herbs and their uses. DK Books. p 251

Coombes, A.J., 2000, Trees. Dorling Kindersley Handbooks. p 61

Cundall, P., (ed.), 2004, Gardening Australia: flora: the gardener's bible. ABC Books. p 797

Etherington, K., & Imwold, D., (Eds), 2001, Botanica's Trees & Shrubs. The illustrated A-Z of over 8500 trees and shrubs. Random House, Australia. p 423

Farrar, J.L., 1995, Trees of the Northern United States and Canada. Iowa State University press/Ames p 70

Grandtner, M. M., 2008, World Dictionary of Trees. Wood and Forest Science Department. Laval University, Quebec, Qc Canada. (Internet database http://www.wdt.qc.ca)

Kermath, B. M., et al, 2014, Food Plants in the Americas: A survey of the domesticated, cultivated and wild plants used for Human food in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. On line draft. p 471

Kuhnlein, H. V. and Turner, N. J., 1991, Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples. Food and Nutrition in History and Anthropology Volume 8. Gordon and Breach. p 36

MacKinnon, A., et al, 2009, Edible & Medicinal Plants of Canada. Lone Pine. p 38

Moerman, D. F., 2010, Native American Ethnobotany. Timber Press. p 296

N. Amer. Sylv. 3:143. 1849

Porsild, A.E., 1974, Rocky Mountain Wild Flowers. Natural History Series No. 2 National Museums of Canada. p 34

Stubbs, R. D., 1966, An investigation of the Edible and Medicinal Plants used by the Flathead Indians. MA thesis University of Montana. p 56

Turner, N., 1997, Food Plants of Interior First Peoples. Royal BC Museum Handbook p 50

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/3497a627-69dd-44f6-b7ae-98706d1d5957