



Washington Association Of Conservation Districts

PLANT MATERIAL CENTER

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WESTERN LARCH

Larix occidentalis

Distribution:

Western Larch also known as Tamarack, is predominantly found in the Northeast region of Washington. It also occurs sporadically along the east slope of the Cascades at elevations above 3,000 feet, and in the Blue Mountains in southeast Washington between 2,000 and 4,500 feet.

Growth Habit:

Western Larch is the only *deciduous* conifer currently native to this region. Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), another deciduous conifer, was present until 13 million years ago, when an ice age obliterated it. Larch is a vigorous, upright tree. It can exceed 150 feet tall, with a straight trunk that grows to 3 feet in diameter.



Comments:

Western Larch is an important commercial species. The wood is strong with a long, straight grain. It is used in construction where exceptionally strong wood is required. It is often found as a pioneering species, and is therefore a good species for use in open, disturbed restoration sites. Its seeds are eaten by several species of birds and mammals, and grouse eat the fallen needles. Its bright gold autumn color is valued in the ornamental industry, and even more spectacular in large native stands.

