



Eastern white pine

YOU KNOW IT by its many names: EWP, white pine, northern white pine, Weymouth pine, and its given name: *Pinus strobus*. But at the end of the day, eastern white pine is the granddaddy, the king, the big kahuna of Northeastern lumber species. Let's learn a little more about this versatile, strong, beautiful, sustainable species.

Eastern White Pine: Just the Facts

For years, eastern white pine has been the standard in quality construction and fine woodworking. Across the board, eastern white pine sets the standard for use in building projects that require quality, appearance, and durability. It offers a unique, fine grain perfect for a variety of looks, a nice strong uniform texture, it shapes easily for appearance products that require a profile, and it holds finishes extremely well.

Eastern white pine possesses a large growth footprint that begins in Eastern Canada, then moves into the U.S. throughout the New England and Northeastern states, across to the Great Lakes, and down the Appalachian Mountain ridge into Northern Georgia. It grows well in almost all growing conditions, but it likes growing in fertile, well-drained soil best. In the forest, an eastern white pine tree has a narrow head with a trunk commonly free of live branches; out in the open, the trees tend to be symmetrical and cone-shaped. The tree typically reaches 70-80 ft., with some high achievers topping the 100-ft. mark. The species is a prolific natural regenerator that lends itself to the adage, "If you have one mature eastern white pine, you'll have a hundred seedlings of various ages underneath it!"

The eastern white pine has been such an important tree to Maine, it's reached icon status: Maine is known as the "pine tree state," with the pine cone and tassel of the eastern white pine officially designated as the state's floral emblem in 1895. This love and support of the eastern white pine started back in 1605, when Captain George Weymouth of the British Royal Navy carried wood samples back to his homeland. Strong material with which to

make ship masts was in short supply, and thus the Broad Arrow Policy was enacted in 1691. All pines with a minimum diameter of 24 inches were marked with a "broad arrow" to delineate their future use by the Royal Navy.

How It's Used

There are five primary grades of eastern white pine (we'll get into more about grading in another column!): D&Better Select, Finish, Premium, Standard and Industrial. Available in 23 varying patterns, the species is perfectly suited to appearance-grade applications such as flooring, wall panels and wainscoting, ceilings, and beautiful accents. Don't forget exterior siding, too! The product works well across any and all residential and commercial projects, from seaside cottages and modern cabins to horse barns, restaurants, and schools.

By the Numbers

Eastern white pine is one of New England's most important species, with more than 420 million bd. ft. of lumber manufactured on an annual basis. Approximately 90% of all eastern white pine in the U.S. is produced by 30 mills under the grading auspices of the Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association (NELMA).

Sustainability

As building products across the board are under intense scrutiny to reveal and share their environmental impact and "greenness," it's important to take an accurate look at the lumber industry. According to many sources, the U.S. forest products industry plants, on average, 2.5-3 trees for each one harvested annually. Reforestation efforts vary from region to region, with some areas coming in with a much higher ratio. Our forests—including those of eastern white pine—are growing, expanding and healthy, which is good news to all of us who live among them. The state of Maine is an excellent example of sustainability as around 85% of the state remains forested, even after more than 400 years of harvesting!