

Balsam Fir

Abies balsamea

-Ah, the Balsam Fir. It has that wonderful Christmas Tree smell to it.

-The only conifer in Wisconsin that has cones that grow upwards, but it only produces an abundant crop of cones every 2 to 4 years.

-The Balsam Fir is an extremely important tree to North Central Wisconsin. Not only is it important to the timber industry as a pulp tree, but also it is also important for wildlife shelter and food. It can reach heights of 60 feet and have a 1 foot diameter.

-In the winter when the wind chill is -40° F and we are snug as a bug on a rug in front of the fireplace, where are the animals? Well a lot of them use the Balsam Fir for a refuge. Balsam Firs have branches the entire length of the tree, and there are many needles on each branch. When the snow falls on these trees, it tends to accumulate on the branches due to the density of the needles, thereby causing pressure on them, and making the branches droop. At the base of the tree, there is seldom a lot of snow because it is eroded away by wind hitting on the trunk. So when the branches droop from the pressure of all that snow, they cover the area underneath where there isn't that much snow, thereby making kind of a fort for animals that they can warm up with their body heat.

-Be warned! Although Balsam Fir can develop a good shade tolerance, field grown nursery stock over 4-feet high usually do not adjust in the shade and dies.



**All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee'
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see.**

-Alexander Pope