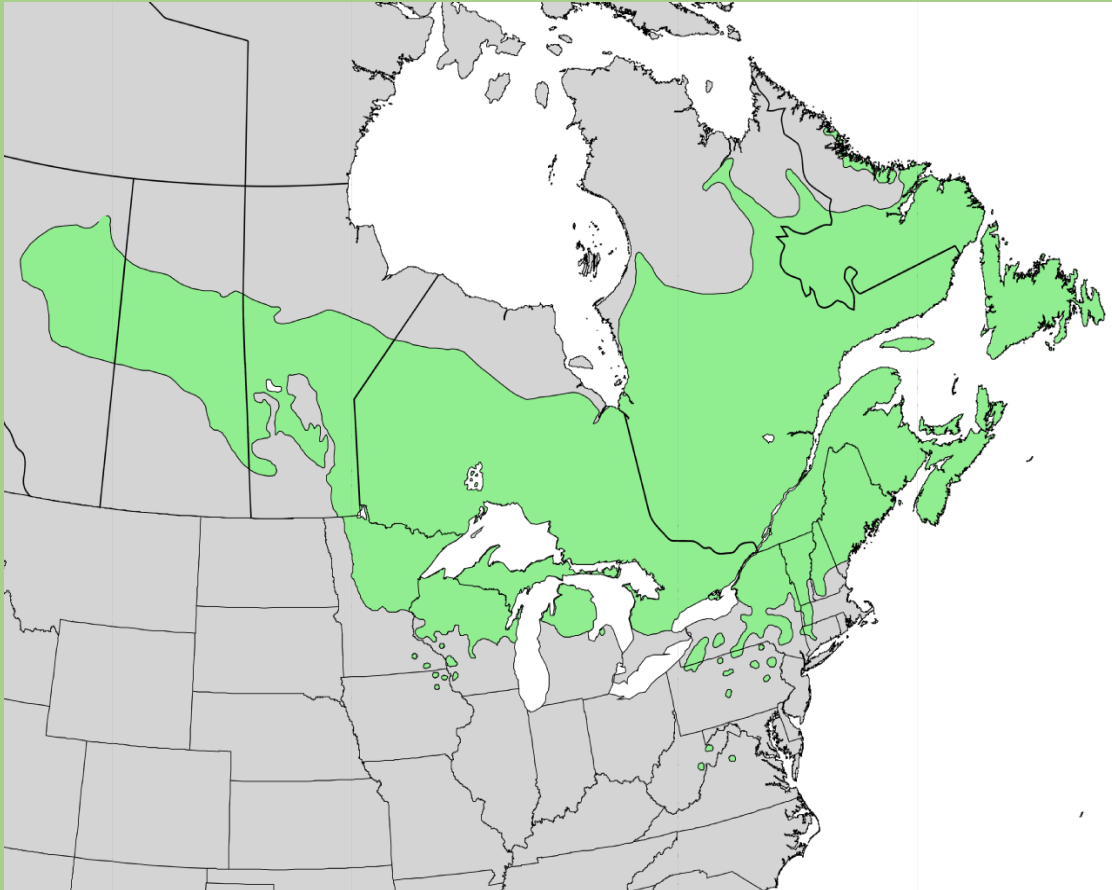


Balsam Fir

Abies balsamea



The balsam fir is an evergreen conifer native to northeastern North America—stretching deep into Canada and extending into New England, the Mid Atlantic and the Midwest. It is a medium sized tree, growing between 45 to 75 feet, with a canopy spread of 20 to 25 feet. Its distinctive soft needles grow to about 0.75 inches in a flat, horizontal plane. The cones can grow up to 4 inches and stand upwards when on the branches. The bark is easy to pick out because of its many resin blisters scattered across the surface, which the tree uses to defend itself and heal wounds. The resin, also called pitch, is not the same as sap, which instead acts as a nutrient source for the tree. Resin blisters are not as common on very young or old trees. Commercially, it is commonly used for lumber, pulp, and Christmas trees. Historically, its resin was used for microscope slides and oil paint.