

THE  
NORTH AMERICAN  
SYLVA;  
OR,  
A DESCRIPTION OF THE FOREST TREES  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES, CANADA AND NOVA SCOTIA,  
NOT DESCRIBED IN THE WORK  
OF  
F. ANDREW MICHAUX,  
AND CONTAINING ALL THE  
FOREST TREES DISCOVERED IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, THE TERRI-  
TORY OF OREGON, DOWN TO THE SHORES OF THE PACIFIC, AND  
INTO THE CONFINES OF CALIFORNIA, AS WELL AS IN  
VARIOUS PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

*ILLUSTRATED BY 122 FINE PLATES.*

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IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. III

BEING THE SIXTH VOLUME OF MICHAUX AND NUTTALL'S NORTH AMERICAN SYLVA.

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## L A R C H.

(LE MELZEE. Fr.)

*Natural Order, CONIFERÆ. Linnæan Classification,  
MONOECIA MONANDRIA.*

## LARIX.\* (TOURNEFORT.)

The plants of this genus differ from the Pines and Firs in having deciduous clustered leaves. Anthers opening longitudinally. Bracts coloured and persistent. The cones are erect, with the scales excavated at the base and persistent.

Deciduous leaved trees with globular prolific buds, usually of large dimensions, natives of the mountainous regions of Europe, the west of Asia and of North America; highly valued for the great durability of their timber.

## WESTERN LARCH TREE.

*LARIX OCCIDENTALIS, foliis rigidis utrinque bicanaliculatis, strobilis  
erectis majusculis, bracteolis sublanceolatis integris longissime foliaco-  
acuminatis squarrosis.*

\* Supposed to be from the Celtic *lar*, fat, in allusion to the abundance of resin which it affords.

WE met with this, apparently distinct species of Larch, in the coves of the Rocky Mountains on the western slope towards the Oregon. It resembles the European Larch, but the leaves are shorter, thicker, and quite rigid, so as to be pungent at the points, and the leaves having a double channel above and beneath, are, though flat, in part tetragonal, the central rib beneath is very wide and obtuse, they are also shining. The longest leaf is scarcely an inch. The cone, (not perfect,) in a young state, has no vestige of pubescence, and the bractes with their leafy points are half an inch long, ovate-lanceolate, a little torn on the upper edges, the centre is carried out into a true rigid channelled and pungent green leaf. It appears allied to *L. pendula*, but the leaves are twice as thick. The quality of its wood, or any thing concerning its economy we had no opportunity to learn; that of the small coned American Larch (*Larix microcarpa*), is so ponderous, that it will scarcely swim in water.

The European Larch (*Larix Europæa*), thrives well in the northern parts of the Union, particularly round Boston, and is at once extremely useful and ornamental. In suitable situations the timber arrives at perfection in 40 years, or in about half the time as that of the Scotch Pine, and it is found to grow best in poor sandy and rocky soils where scarcely any thing else will survive. When fully grown it attains the height of from 60 to 130 feet. Its durability, exposed either to the action of the air or water, is without any parallel. The wood is also of a beautiful yellowish-white colour, sometimes inclining to brown, very hard, capable of receiving a degree of polish equal to any wood yet known, and much superior in this respect to that of the finest mahogany. The log cottages constructed of the squared trunks of larch, in the valleys and other parts of Switzerland, last for centuries without alteration; it is also used for shingles to cover the roofs of the houses and for

vine props. For the latter purpose it is found the most durable of all kinds of wood; the vine props made of it are never taken up, they remain fixed for an indefinite succession of years, and see crop after crop of the vines spring up, bear their fruit and perish at their feet, without showing any symptoms of decay. In most cases, the proprietors of the vineyards are perfectly ignorant of the epoch when these props were first placed there; they received them in their present state from their fathers, and in the same state they will transmit them to their sons. Props made of the Silver Fir, and used for the same purpose, would not last more than 10 years. The wood of the Larch, according to Hartig, weighs 68lb. 13oz. per cubic foot, when green, and 36lb. 6oz. when dry, and it is said to last four times longer than that of any other tree of the Abietinae.

Venice Turpentine is one of its products, for which the trunk is tapped; and a full grown larch will yield annually 7 or 8 pounds for 40 or 50 years in succession.

The bark is also used for tanning, and considered equal to that of the birch, which is used for that purpose in Russia and Sweden.

The fine grain of the larch wood, as well as its durability and stability have long recommended it to painters for their palettes, and for painting panels; and according to Pliny it was employed for this purpose by the ancients; and Evelyn remarks, that several of the paintings of Raphael are on larch wood.

#### PLATE CXX.

Branch of the natural size with the cone. a. The leaf. b. The bracte of the cone.