

Shortleaf Pine; Yellow Pine

Pinus echinata

Description

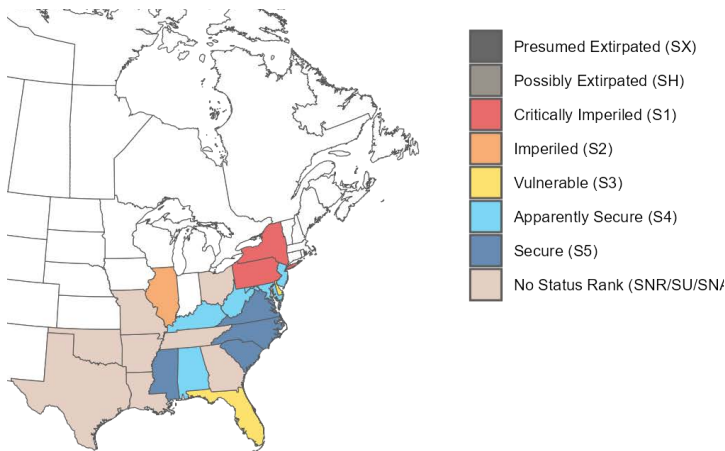
Shortleaf pine is an evergreen coniferous tree that may grow 80 to 100 feet (25-30 meters) tall, often with much of the trunk free of lateral dead branches. The bark is reddish-brown and forms scaly plates. The leaves are evergreen, needle-like, in bundles of 2 or occasionally 3, from 2 to 5 inches (5-12 cm) long, relatively slender, and tend to be straight or only slightly twisted. The cones are narrowly egg-shaped, 1½ to 2½ inches (4-6 cm) long, and made up of thin scales that are spirally arranged and have a thickened tip with a short, sharp spine. The cones may persist on the tree for several years.



Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



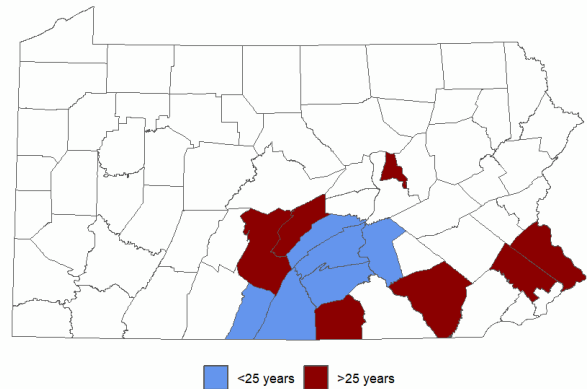
Distribution & Habitat

Shortleaf pine has a distribution from New York south and west into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, where it reaches a northern border of its range, the occurrences are primarily in the southcentral counties. It grows mainly in well drained upland woods and slopes.

Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers shortleaf pine to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently confirmed. It does not have a PA legal rarity status, but has been assigned a suggested rarity status of Threatened by PABS.

Short-leaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*)



Conservation Considerations

More field surveys are needed to determine the range, abundance, and ecological requirements of shortleaf pine.

Based on current data, the long-term viability of occurrences will probably require special management, such as prescribed fire, since the species is very intolerant of shade and early successional conditions are necessary for establishment of seedlings.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S1S2 – Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2025.
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania: Annotated Checklist and Atlas. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2000. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.