



COMMON JUNIPER *Juniperus communis* L.

Common juniper is found primarily as a shrub in pastures and open spaces on shallow, rocky soil. It occurs infrequently, primarily in the southern half of the state. It is occasionally found as a tree. Specimens up to 25 feet in height have been recorded, but are extremely rare.

The **bark** is grayish-brown and occurs in thin, longitudinal, shredded layers. The inner portion has a reddish tinge. The **leaves** occur in whorls of three. They are sharp, stiff, dagger-like and persist for several seasons. They are $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length. The upper surface is concave and marked with a broad, white line. The underside, which due

to the bending of the twigs usually appears uppermost, is dark green.

The **fruit** is dark blue, covered with a thin bloom and is slightly smaller than a pea. Fruits remain on the trees during the winter, and have a strong resinous taste. The fruit is usually found only on select trees since male and female flowers are generally produced on separate trees. This trait is common to most junipers.

The **wood** is hard, close-grained and very durable. The heartwood is light brown. Large stems make long-lasting fence posts if the bark is removed.

Juniper shavings can be used for pet bedding. In Europe, the fruits are used to make gin.



Common juniper is usually found as a shrub rather than as a tree.

