

9. American Yew

Dr. Philip C. Walker
Memorial
Botanical Trail



The American Yew (*Taxus canadensis*), an evergreen shrub, has pointed needles that are green on both sides and smooth twigs. Female plants have red berry-like fruits with single hard seeds visible from underneath. There are reports that twigs, foliage and seeds may be dangerous to livestock. However, the berries are eaten by birds and the foliage is a preferred food of deer and moose. American yew was used in the manufacture of bows before the coming of firearms. Therefore, the name *Taxus* was given to this strong, close-grained wood and is from the ancient Greek word meaning bow.