

Vegetation Keys

Vegetation keys are designed to be used in sequence. Users first determine forest group using the forest group key (Figure 1). This directs the user to a section of the vegetation type key (Figure 2). Beginning at the top of the appropriate forest group proceed through the key. Each step (number on the left) in both keys involves two decision points labeled a. and b. Read each statement and choose the one which best fits the stand condition. This statement will lead to another pair of statements or to the name of the forest group or vegetation type. To reduce the likelihood of errors, users are reminded to pay close attention to cover class definitions and thresholds used in the keys. Once a VT is determined, consult the appropriate fact sheet to verify the decision.

Figure 1. Key to the forest groups of Nova Scotia

In this key, **tree cover** refers to the relative percent cover. (i.e. the percentage of total overstory cover)

Ground vegetation cover refers to the absolute percent cover. (i.e. the total area covered on the ground)

Cover Classes: **Sparse** < 10% **Scattered** 10-25 % **Abundant** 26-50% **Dominant** >50%

- 1a. Eastern white cedar present (excluding ornamental escapes) CEDAR FOREST (CE)
- 1b. Eastern white cedar absent 2
- 2a. Stands on poorly to very poorly drained soils with mainly hydrophytic vegetation. Common indicator plants include black spruce, tamarack, Labrador tea, leatherleaf, winterberry, cinnamon fern, sensitive fern, creeping snowberry, crested wood fern and sphagnum. 3
- 2b. Stands on rapidly to imperfectly drained soils that are seldom if ever temporarily flooded and with little or no hydrophytic vegetation. Common indicator plants include red spruce, white pine, red pine, hemlock, sugar maple, yellow birch, red oak, wild lily-of-the-valley, starflower, bunchberry, sarsaparilla, bracken, teaberry, wood ferns and hay-scented fern. 4
- 3a. Stands with $\geq 75\%$ softwood in the overstory WET CONIFEROUS FOREST (WC)
- 3b. Stands with $< 75\%$ softwood in the overstory WET DECIDUOUS FOREST (WD)
- 4a. Stands on old fields and pastures OLD FIELD FOREST (OF)
- 4b. Stands not on old fields and pastures 5
- 5a. Stands adjacent to rivers and subject to regular or periodic flooding. FLOODPLAIN FOREST (FP)
- 5b. Stands that are not regularly or periodically flooded 6
- 6a. Stands located in Coastal or Highland Ecoregions 7

- 6b. Stands not located in Coastal or Highland Ecoregions 8
- 7a. Stands usually restricted to high elevations of the Cape Breton Plateau and characterized by balsam fir and various amounts of white birch, white spruce and heart-leaf birch. HIGHLAND FOREST (HL)
- 7b. Stands associated with cool and moisture laden maritime winds and usually found within 1km of the coast or on coastal islands. COASTAL FOREST (CO)
- 8a. Stands on karst topography with bedrock exposures. KARST FOREST (KA)
- 8b. Stands not on karst topography with bedrock exposures. 9
- 9a. Stands in an open woodland condition OPEN WOODLAND (OW)
- 9b. Stands not in an open woodland condition 10
- 10a. Stands with $\geq 75\%$ softwood in the overstory 11
- 10b. Stands with $< 75\%$ softwood in the overstory 12
- 11a. Black spruce and/or pines dominant SPRUCE - PINE FOREST (SP)
- 11b. Black spruce and/or pines not dominant SPRUCE - HEMLOCK FOREST (SH)
- 12a. Stands with $\geq 25\%$ softwood in the overstory MIXEDWOOD FOREST (MW)
- 12b. Stands with $< 25\%$ softwood in the overstory 13
- 13a. Stands dominated by a combination of successional hardwoods (large-tooth aspen, trembling aspen, white birch, red oak, red maple) INTOLERANT HARDWOOD FOREST (IH)
- 13b. Stands dominated by northern hardwoods (sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, white ash, ironwood) alone, or in combination with red maple, white birch, red oak or aspen TOLERANT HARDWOOD FOREST (TH)



Wood frog