

# Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

## Pitch pine - leatherleaf palustrine woodland

These wetlands occur on shallow peat over glacial till, often in burned-over areas, and/or in small basins. Scattered *Betula populifolia* (gray birch), *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine), and *Acer rubrum* (red maple) may also occur, although *P. rigida* (pitch pine) is usually the dominant tree. *Chamaedaphne calyculata* (leatherleaf) generally forms a dense shrub layer. Other shrubs include *Aronia melanocarpa* (black chokeberry), *Vaccinium myrtilloides* (velvet-leaf blueberry), *Kalmia angustifolia* (sheep laurel), *Ledum groenlandicum*<sup>S</sup> (Labrador tea), *Rhododendron canadense* (rhodora), *Gaylussacia baccata* (black huckleberry), and *V. corymbosum* (highbush blueberry). There is a sphagnum layer beneath, often with *Vaccinium macrocarpon* (cranberry).

**Related types:** Although *Rhododendron canadense* (rho-dora) often occurs in these wetlands, this community type may be distinguished from the much rarer "Pitch pine - rhodora - scrub oak woodland" by its hydrology (this type is a wetland, the mesic till types are not) as well as by species composition. See the description of the "Mesic till barren complex" for more information on the ecology of mesic till barrens.

**Range:** Glaciated NE, Pocono Plateau.

**Selected references:** Reschke 1990.

**[Crosswalk:** TNC's *Pinus rigida* Saturated Woodland Alliance, *Pinus rigida* / *Chamaedaphne calyculata* / *Sphagnum* spp. Community, SAF's Pitch pine (45).]