

Western Larch Species Overview

Western larch (or tamarack) is the most widely and successfully planted conifer in north Idaho. It is the "bread and butter" of reforestation in the region.

Tree Planting Properties of Western Larch

1. Excellent Survival

- Western larch generally has the best planting survival of any species in the area.
- Larch is ecologically adapted to be the first species that comes back after a wildfire. A disturbed logging site provides similar conditions of bare soil and plenty of sunlight – just what larch needs to thrive!

2. Fast Early Growth

- Larch thrives in full sunlight and has by far the fastest early growth of any native conifer.
- Seedlings are commonly **6+ feet tall** within 2-5 years.

3. Browse Resistance

- Deer and elk browse is a major tree planting challenge.
- Western larch loses its needles in the fall so is less palatable to deer in March and April when they are hungry. Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine are both much more susceptible to browse than larch.

4. Disease Resistance & Broad Soil Suitability

- Western larch is resistant to root rot diseases that cause significant problems with Douglas-fir and grand fir. Reforesting root-diseased stands with western larch is often a good plan.
- Larch is suitable for all local soil types except for dry and rocky ponderosa pine sites.

5. Strong Wood Quality

- Larch is sold together with Douglas-fir as the Fir-Larch species mix which has the highest wood strength ratings and generally the second highest log prices after cedar.

6. Aesthetic Value

- Larch turns a bright gold in the fall enhancing aesthetics for your timberland or even around your home or cabin.

