

Red Cedar House

Welcome to The Red Cedar House!

The eastern red cedar tree is a very important tree in Piscataway Park. One of the four sacred medicine plants (along with sage, tobacco, and sweetgrass), eastern red cedar has special spiritual significance for the Piscataway people (and many other Indigenous people on Turtle Island).

It is used in ceremonies and burned to purify the home. In past generations, wood from the red cedar was used to build longhouses, as the wood lasted a long time and insects don't like it.

As a medicine, teas and salves are made from the berries, needles, roots, resin, and young twigs to cure a variety of different ailments.



Tree of Life

There is a very special red cedar tree in Piscataway Park, planted by Chief Turkey Tayac in 1976. Called the "Tree of Life" by the Piscataway, the red cedar marked the tribe's ancestral burial ground.

Chief Turkey Tayac himself was eventually laid to rest under the shade of the tree he had planted, and it still holds sacred and ceremonial significance for many tribal members. Check out "The Flickering Flame" on YouTube to learn more about Chief Turkey Tayac.

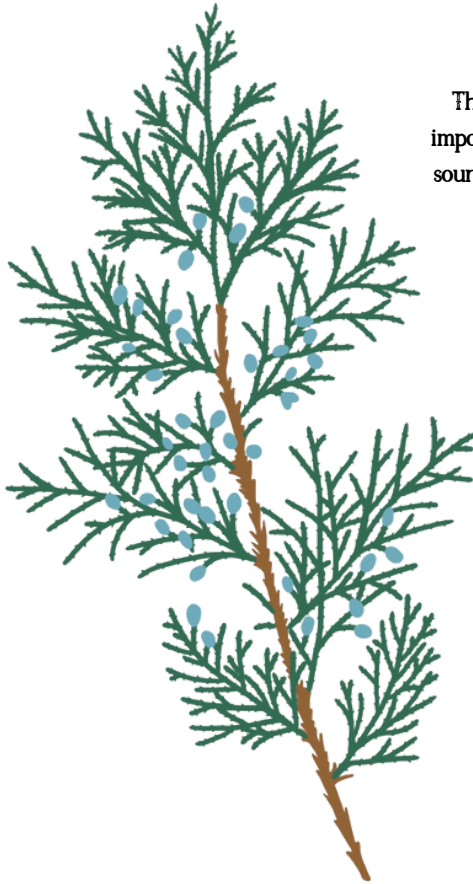
Fairy House Artist: Melissa Stamper

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Eastern Red Cedar

Juniperus virginiana

The Eastern red cedar is an evergreen conifer with small, scaly, needle-like leaves, tiny cones, and dark blue berry-like fruits. It's a member of the juniper family, and it has deep red-brown bark that is fibrous and peels in strips.



The berries are an important winter food source for many birds.

There is a whole lane lined with eastern red cedar trees, but can you find the tree the fairies marked on their map? Look for reddish-brown bark that is peeling and scaly needles. You may also see the blue berries.

