

**BULLETIN NO. 17. U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE. DIVISION OF
FORESTRY. CHECK LIST OF THE
FOREST TREES OF THE UNITED
STATES: THEIR NAMES AND RANGES**

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GEORGE B. SUDWORTH

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
DIVISION OF FORESTRY.

CHECK LIST

OF THE

FOREST TREES OF THE UNITED STATES,

THEIR NAMES AND RANGES.

BY
GEORGE B. SUDWORTH,
Dendrologist of the Division of Forestry.

Issued November 5, 1898.

PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
B. E. FERNOW,
Chief of the Division of Forestry.



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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
DIVISION OF FORESTRY,
Washington, D. C., March 7, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith for publication a Check List of the Forest Trees of the United States, prepared by Mr. George B. Sudworth, Dendrologist of the Division.

It represents in the main a condensed reproduction of Bulletin No. 14, Nomenclature of the Arborescent Flora of the United States, by the same author, with notes on the distribution of trees added for better identification.

This shorter list, it is believed, will be helpful in bringing about a more uniform and stable use of names by lumbermen, nurserymen, and others interested in forest trees.

Respectfully,

B. E. FERNOW,
Chief of Division.

HON. JAMES WILSON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

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INTRODUCTION.

The first necessity for any forestry work is a knowledge of the trees which the forester is apt to meet in the forest, and again the first knowledge before he can think or talk of trees is that of their names.

While most of our forest trees are named both by botanists and laymen, a great number of entirely different kinds, or species, have received the same name, and also the same species has received a great number of names by which it is called in different parts of its range of occurrence. This confusion of names has led not only to many annoying inconveniences and misunderstandings, but often to fatal mistakes, as when a nurseryman fills an order with an entirely different kind of tree than was intended by the customer, or when a lumberman supplies an architect with an unsuitable material because their ideas as to what was ordered are at variance. Hence, the Division of Forestry has considered it a first duty to arrive at a uniform and stable nomenclature, both of scientific and vernacular names, by a revision of the existing names, or synonymy, in the hope that, while neither uniformity nor stability can be brought about by the mere publication of a list of names, such publication, carefully considered, might at least pave the way for such a desired end.

The botanical names have been revised according to certain laws now adopted by many botanists. The revision has been made by the competent Dendrologist of the Division, Mr. George B. Sudworth, and has been printed with a full synonymy and explanations in Bulletin No. 14 of this Division, Nomenclature of the Arborescent Flora of the United States. This bulky publication was, however, printed only in limited numbers, thereby preventing its widespread use. Since for practical uses it was not necessary to state the entire botanical synonymy, and in order to make the work more accessible, the present check list, being in part an abbreviated and amended reproduction of Bulletin No. 14, has been prepared.

For better identification, and in order to increase the value of the list, the geographical range of the species has been added in a few brief words.

The list of names comprises an enumeration of all the trees indigenous to the United States, 495 in number, the designation of "tree" being applied to all woody plants which produce naturally in their native habitat one main, erect stem bearing a definite crown, no matter what size they attain.

A few thoroughly naturalized trees are also noted, and natural or artificial varieties and hybrids have been fully cited.

Underneath the name adopted as correct according to the laws of nomenclature referred to, whenever a change has been made from the name usually found in current text-books, the text-book name is also given, in different type.

The selection of a vernacular name from the multitude of those in use is much more difficult, especially since the same name is often applied to many totally different trees. Thus, we have 12 Ironwoods, 16 Junipers, 6 Yellow Pines, 8 Balsams, etc., each referring to different species and often to different genera. There are also many species which have no vernacular name, not being recognized by the layman. There is no law upon the basis of which a selection could be made. The selection, therefore, had to be based on a few common-sense rules as a guide and with the principle of conservatism, the only rational one, in the foreground. A large number of correspondents were asked to submit lists of names in common use in various localities. Upon the basis of these lists the name used in the greatest number of localities has been given the preference unless it was also applied to some other tree, when, as an interference had to be avoided, either another name most commonly used or a name most descriptive and pertinent was selected. When possible, and where no vernacular names existed, a translation of the botanical name was taken, keeping, however, in mind the "name quality" of the combination, that is, a combination into the use of which as a name it would be natural to fall.

In some cases, where confusion or undesirable inconsistency was caused by one name serving different genera, an attempt at segregation without too much violence to well-established usage has been made, as, for instance, in the case of Cedar. This name is used indiscriminately for *Juniperus*, *Thuja*, *Chamaecyparis*, and *Libocedrus*. We have with consistency adopted the names Juniper for the first, Arborvitæ for the second, and Cedar for the last two, well aware that it may be difficult to overcome the objection of the logger's practice, at least to the name Arborvitæ.

To enable ready reference and pave the way for general adoption of these names, not only a complete index to all the common names in the list, but a full synonymy grouped by States is added, so that the layman or botanist can readily determine what plant probably is meant by the native.

Changes in practice can only come gradually and as the desirability for change appears; then what is sensible and adaptable will be adopted and what lacks in adaptability will fail of acceptance. This list, therefore, is to be considered only as a first step to improvement and will serve as basis for further work of this Division.

B. E. FERNOW.

NOTE ON RANGE OF SPECIES.

The first attempt in recent years to enumerate all of the North American trees (north of the Mexican boundary), with a description of their range and habitat, was made by Prof. C. S. Sargent, and the catalogue was published in a bulky volume (IX) of the Tenth Census (1884). The rapid increase of knowledge of American trees since then, however, has made many additions necessary, both as to newly discovered species and as to a better understanding of the range of many of those new or little known and also of the well-known species. The elaborate *Silva of North America*, which Professor Sargent has now nearly completed as a sequel and amplification, with botanical features, etc., of the Tenth Census catalogue, will be the most complete work issued, but from its high price it must unfortunately remain inaccessible to many.

Aside from these two works our best information concerning the number of species and range of North American trees is to be found chiefly in such regional works on botany as Gray's *Manual of Botany of the Northern States*, *Synoptical Flora of North America* (unfinished), Chapman's *Flora of the Southern States*, Coulter's *Manual of Rocky Mountain Botany and Botany of Western Texas*, and the *Botany of California*, by Sereno Watson and other collaborators; also, recently, the *Illustrated Flora of the United States and Canada*, by Britton and Brown. Other sources of information are found in the modest and often little known State and county catalogues of plants issued by local botanists, together with various articles scattered through American and foreign scientific journals and proceedings of scientific societies.

Moreover, the army of professional and amateur botanists engaged in botanical research are yearly bringing to light new facts, which are constantly enlarging our understanding of the geographical distribution of trees and other plants. But our knowledge of the range of tree species alone, especially since so vast a territory, with nearly 500 different species, has to be compassed, must long remain a variable quantity; and the sum total of facts concerning the geographical range of any of our trees must necessarily be an expression of the united efforts of all working botanists; for the unaided diligence of one man's lifetime could never carry his search and study into all of nature's hiding places for even trees alone. The geographical range notes presented in this volume are, therefore, drawn from all the reliable botanical publications available, supplemented by new facts personally gathered in recent field work.