

Canadian yew (*Taxus canadensis*) and eastern hemlock saplings (*Tsuga canadensis*) look a lot alike but can be distinguished (<https://www.purduelandscapereport.org/article/distinguishing-hemlock-from-yew/>). Hemlock needles are white on the underside unlike yew needles. Unlike the hemlock, the Canadian yew is a low growing conifer preferring swampy forests and lake shores. Also, unlike the hemlock's dry cones, the yew bears soft red berries, called an aril, open at the end. The berries are eaten by thrushes, waxwings and other birds, which disperse the toxic hard seeds undamaged in their droppings.

All parts of the Canadian yew, except for the aril, are poisonous. Its resins include a class of chemicals called taxanes that have been modified into important cancer-fighting drugs such as paclitaxel (branded as Taxol).

