

C06

Red maple – Birch / Bunchberry – Sarsaparilla

Acer rubrum – *Betula* spp. / *Cornus canadensis* –
Aralia nudicaulis

n=6



Blanche,
Shelburne County

Concept: This late successional Vegetation Type (VT) has an overstory dominated by red maple and/or white birch. Extensive conifer regeneration often dominates the shrub layer. Red maple – White birch / Bunchberry – Sarsaparilla is usually associated with more sheltered sites within the Atlantic Coastal ecoregion.

Vegetation: Red maple and white birch are the dominant overstory trees with balsam fir as a common associate. Heart-leaf birch (a species confined to the Coastal and Highland ecoregions) and yellow birch are sometimes found scattered in the overstory, while red oak, white pine and white spruce may also be present in western Nova Scotia. The shrub layer is often dominated by regenerating balsam fir. Other shrubs may include wild raisin, huckleberry, lambkill and mountain-ash (which can sometimes attain overstory height). Herb layer diversity is low, and bunchberry, goldthread, sarsaparilla, wood sorrel and bracken are common. The bryophyte layer is relatively well developed for a hardwood VT, dominated by Schreber's and hypnum mosses. *Bazzania* can also be found where coarse woody debris has accumulated on the forest floor.

Ecological Features

This small patch white birch and red maple forest is principally associated with the Maritime Boreal Atlantic Coastal ecoregion. It is usually found further inland, protected by seaward stands of spruce and fir forest or on sites

sheltered from coastal winds and salt spray. Young red maple shoots are a food source favoured by deer. The canopy of red maples and white birch provide excellent nesting cover for many species of birds. Seeds of both species are eaten

Environmental Setting: C06 is associated with fresh to moist, nutrient medium to rich soils of glacial origin. These soils are generally medium to coarse textured. This VT occurs on relatively well drained upper and middle slopes of gentle terrain along the Atlantic coastline. Sites are generally more sheltered than those associated with softwood dominated VTs in this group (C01 – C04). C06 likely occurs in coastal areas of both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, but has not been documented.

Successional Dynamics: C06 is a late successional VT dominated by red maple and white birch. This even-aged VT typically follows stand-replacing disturbances such as windthrow, breakage, insect infestation and harvesting. Although still influenced by wind and exposure, like other coastal VTs, increased shelter allows hardwood tree species to rise above softwoods on C06 sites. However, softwoods (particularly balsam fir) will often dominate disturbed areas until hardwoods become re-established. C05 (White birch – Balsam fir / Foxberry – Wood aster) is a mid-successional stage.

by a variety of small mammals that find cover in tree cavities and woody debris. Wild raisin, huckleberry, blueberry and mountain-ash provide important seasonal berry crops.

Characteristic Plants

C06

	Freq. (%)	Cover (%)
Red maple	67	40.8
White birch	50	29.0
Balsam fir	33	13.0
Yellow birch	33	3.5
Heart-leaf birch	17	18.0
Black spruce	17	5.0
Tree Layer (Mean % Cover)		51
Balsam fir	83	8.6
Wild raisin	67	5.5
Lambkill	67	4.8
Velvet-leaf blueberry	67	1.5
Huckleberry	50	29.7
Mountain-ash	50	0.2
White birch	50	0.1
Black spruce	33	2.3
False holly	33	1.6
Red maple	33	1.0
Yellow birch	33	0.3
White spruce	33	0.2
Common blackberry	33	0.1
Shrub Layer (Mean % Cover)		35
Bunchberry	83	17.2
Goldthread	83	3.8
Sarsaparilla	67	4.6
Bracken	67	3.3
Starflower	67	0.1
Cinnamon fern	50	1.0
Evergreen wood fern	50	0.3
Wood-sorrel	33	40.3
Trailing blackberry	33	2.5
Eastern spreading wood fern	33	1.9
Wild lily-of-the-valley	33	1.0
Brownish sedge	33	0.5
Drooping wood sedge	33	0.1
Fibrous-root sedge	33	0.1
Pink lady's slipper	33	0.1
Spinulose wood fern	33	0.1
Wood aster	33	0.1
Herb Layer (Mean % Cover)		40
Schreber's moss	67	5.5
Hypnum moss	50	6.0
Broom moss	50	0.7
Bazzania	33	1.4
Bryo-Lichen Layer (Mean % Cover)		12

Distinguishing Features

Red maple and white birch are common in the overstory of this coastal mixedwood forest. Though not always present, mountain-ash, heart-leaf birch, foxberry and bazzania are indicators of a coastal influence. Moss coverage on the forest floor is still extensive even with the hardwood overstory.



Mountain-ash

Site Characteristics

Slope Position:	Middle ⁵ Upper ³ Level ²
Surface Stoniness:	(Very - Excessively) ⁵ (Moderately) ³ (Non - Slightly) ²
Bedrock Outcrop:	(Non-rocky) ⁸ (Slightly - Moderately) ²
Elevation Range:	33 - 121m
Slope Gradient:	Moderate ⁵ Gentle ³ Level ²
Aspect:	North ² East ² South ² West ² None ²
Exposure:	Exposed ⁸ Mod. exposed ²
Microtopography:	Slightly ⁵ Moderately ³ Strongly ²
Drainage:	Moderately well ⁵ Imperfect ³ Well ²

Soil Characteristics

Soil Type:	ST2-L ³ ST3 ³ nd ³
Parent Material:	Glacial till ⁸ Colluvium ²
Rooting Depth (cm):	(<30) ² (30-45) ⁵ (>45) ¹ nd ²
Duff Thickness (cm):	(6-10) ³ (11-20) ³ nd ³

