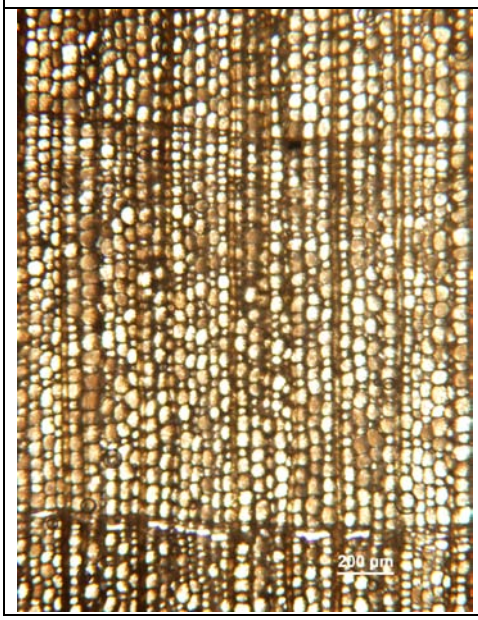
Ginkgo beckii **(Ginkgo)**

Family: Ginkgoaceae

Naming reference: Scott, R.A., E.S. Barghoorn & U. Prakash. 1962. Wood of Ginkgo in the Tertiary of western North America. American Journal of Botany 49, 1095-1101.

Additional reference: Wheeler, E.A. & T.A. Dillhoff. 2009. The Middle Miocene wood flora of Vantage, Washington, USA. IAWA Journal, Supplement 7. 101p.

Transverse section	Radial section (large cells in bottom center of image are idioblasts)	Tangential section
		

Photos courtesy Dr. E.A. Wheeler

Diagnostic features: Ginkgo wood can be reasonably identified provided sufficient magnification is available. In cross section, the tracheids appear to be variable in size throughout the growth ring, unlike the conifers. Tracheids also appear rounded to elliptical in outline. Rays are uniseriate, 2-15 cells high, and inflated parenchyma cells (idioblasts) are often visible in radial and tangential sections.

Discussion: Ginkgo is one of the rarest and most sought after wood types in the Columbia River Basalts. In the early 1930s, Professor George Beck of Central Washington Normal School (now Central Washington University) recognized the appearance of Ginkgo leaves in many of the floras from the same time period as the basalt flows, and made it a special quest to find fossilized Ginkgo wood. He succeeded in 1932, finding a log in what is now the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park. Since then, less than a dozen logs of this type have been found in all of the Columbia River Basalts. The majority of Ginkgo wood in museum and private collections comes from a single log which was found in the 1940s southeast of Ellensburg (this site is now on the Yakima Training Center and off limits to collecting). Because of its desirability, many specimens have been misidentified as Ginkgo. We have seen conifers such as *Taxodioxylon*, as well as angiosperm woods such as sweet gum, tupelo gum, and even an elm labeled as Ginkgo. Some of these woods can bear a superficial resemblance to Ginkgo when seen through a hand lens, but aren't too difficult to distinguish given a bit of experience.

Ginkgo beckii **- UWBM 96265, Squaw Creek**