

# The Birch Wave Tuckamore of Skorradalur

*Alexander Robertson*

In early April, 2006 a light snowfall fell in Skorradalur which provided an excellent opportunity to see wind-shaped forested profiles across the entire landscape that would not be readily seen from the ground when the trees are in full leaf.

. At the entrance to Skorradalur we observed wave-like formations in birch tuckamore (dwarf forest) and similar, well-defined wavelike patterns in birch as one progresses further up the valley. The coniferous forest does not exhibit wind-shaped formations. The location of the birch wave tuckamore is located on the Loftmyndir ehf aerial photos.



The pattern of the birch wave tuckamore is similar to the fir wave tuckamore at L'Anse aux Clair on the south coast of Labrador; inasmuch it is created by up-valley, cross-slope winds often laden with wet snow and /or freezing rain. The L'Anse aux Clair does not produce seed, it regenerates by layering, i.e., from epicormic shoots that were pressed to the soil by heavy snow and/or ice-loading. As the weather-beaten trees mature they die back – such that dead-tree strips move uphill in roughly 80-100 year cycles. Too slow for humans to notice.

The birch wave tuckamore is also shaped by the same wind patterns and for the most part, like the L'Anse aux Clair wave tuckamore, probably also reproduces chiefly by layering as opposed to natural regeneration from seed. If so, although it may produce seed which may not mature or be able to germinate if it did, it would appear to be a clonal forest for the most part. That is something for the scientist to investigate.





Balsam fir wave tuckamore at L'Anse aux Clair with it's characteristic dead tree-strips.



Two balsam fir wave forests created by cross-slope winds. Port aux Basque in south west (top) and Ship Harbour in the southe east of Newfoundland, respectively. In both cases the dead-tree strips move up-hill in 60-70 year cycles. Considerably faster than the Labradorot clonal wave tuckamore.