



Douglasfir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Alex X. Niemiera, Professor, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

Summary

Foliage: About 1 inch long; green to blue-green to gray-green needles; evergreen

Height: About 40 feet (landscape conditions)

Spread: About 15 feet (landscape conditions)

Shape: Narrow conical

Main Features

Douglasfir is a large and stately narrow conical conifer that is native to the Pacific Northwest (*P. menziesii* var. *menziesii*) and Rocky Mountains (*P. menziesii* var. *glauca*). Trees in native habitats are often taller than 100 feet; however, landscape trees rarely exceed 50 feet. Outside of its native range, douglasfir tends to be a relatively short-lived tree due to less than ideal growing conditions and to pest problems. Trees grown from seed from the Rocky Mountains tend to be more drought tolerant than trees grown from seed from the Pacific Northwest. Due to the potential pest problems, pines and spruces are more suitable choices when a conifer is desired in the landscape.

Plant Needs

Zone: 4 to 6 (survives in zone 7 but usually struggles)

Light: Full sun

Moisture: Average

Soil type: Moist, well-drained loamy soils

pH range: Acid

Functions

Douglasfir functions as a specimen tree (featured by itself) or in mass plantings to serve as a visual barrier or windbreak.

Care

One should site this species in a sunny location. Stressful conditions such as drought and poor soils will dramatically limit the growth of douglasfir and predispose it to pest problems.

Additional Information

Douglasfir is a popular Christmas tree due to its dense habit and relatively long needle retention.