

Blue spruce

Picea pungens

Description

Mainly used as a Christmas tree and not for lumber or wood due to its rarity in nature and wood being brittle and full of knots. [Michigan DNR suggests](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/IC4213TreesNotRecommendedForPlanting_139988_7.pdf) not to plant this species due to it being out of range in Michigan and prone to major disease.

Habit

Slow-growing, large tree, up to 50 meters (164 ft.) tall with a long-conic crown, whorled branches and ascending to slightly-strongly drooping.

Leaves

Needles are evergreen, borne singly and at right angles from all sides of the twig, 1.6-3 cm. long, 4 angled, stiff and sharply spine-tipped, silvery to blue-green in color.

Stems

Twigs are not pendent, stout, yellow-brown,



usually without hair; many small twigs produced on the main trunk and between main whorls of branches. Bark is thick, gray-brown, breaking into furrows and rounded ridges, only slightly scaly.

Flowers

Ornamentally inconspicuous, concentrated in the upper one-third of mature trees. Monoecious, with staminate flowers orange and in the leaf axils, and pistillate flowers green or pink on the stem termini.

Fruits and Seeds

Seed cones are green or violet, ripening pale buff, 6-12 cm. long, ellipsoid, pendent, the scales are elliptic to diamond-shaped, widest below the middle, stiff at the base, the tip is flexible, unevenly toothed, and extending 8-10 mm beyond seed-wing impression.

Habitat

Native to central and southern Rocky Mountain region of the United States. Grows well on stream banks in moist canyon bottoms or on gentle to steep mountain slopes.

Reproduction

Begins to produce seed at about 20 years; and occur between 50-150 years. Good cone years occur at intervals of 2-3 years. Seed germination is mostly confined to exposed mineral soil with side shade and overhead light.

Similar

Credits

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