

*Casuarina spp.: Australian-Pine*¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

Introduction

Long-favored for use in erosion control along beaches, Australian-Pine Tree is now outlawed in many parts of Florida due to its invasive nature, rapid growth rate, and non-native status. It is not a true pine tree and is not related to the pines. A straight, upright tree capable of reaching 70 to 90 feet in height and possessing rough, fissured, dark gray bark, Australian-Pine has what appear to be long, soft, gray/green needles but these "needles" are actually multi-jointed branchlets, the true leaves being rather inconspicuous. These "needles" sway gently in the breeze and give off a distinctive, soft whistle when winds are particularly strong. The insignificant flowers are followed by small, spiny cones, less than one-inch-long.

General Information

Scientific name: *Casuarina spp.*

Pronunciation: kass-yoo-ar-EYE-nuh species

Common name(s): Australian-Pine, Casuarina

Family: *Casuarinaceae*

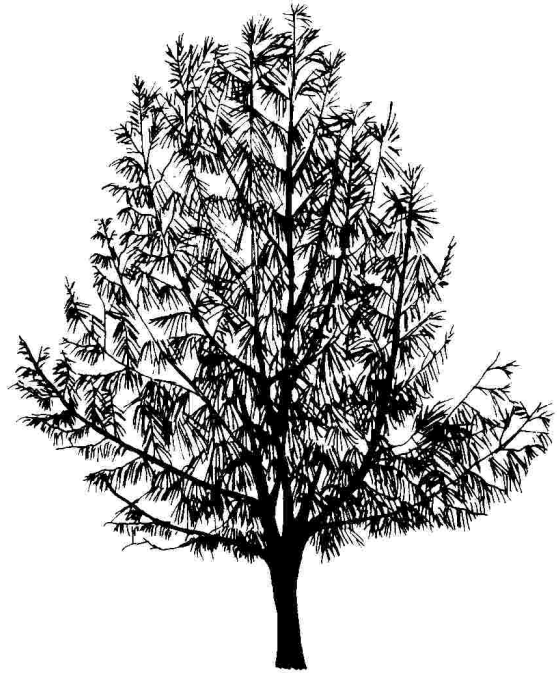


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Casuarina spp.*: Australian-Pine

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: According to the IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Floridas Natural Areas (Fox *et al.* 2005), *Casuaina*

1. This document is ENH288, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised April, 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

spp. (Australian-pine) is prohibited for use in Florida.

Uses:

Availability: not native to North America

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: scale-like

Leaf venation: unknown



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 70 to 90 feet

Spread: 30 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: upright/erect

Crown density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: not showy

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Fruit

Fruit shape: round, oval

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thin, medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: can form large surface roots

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

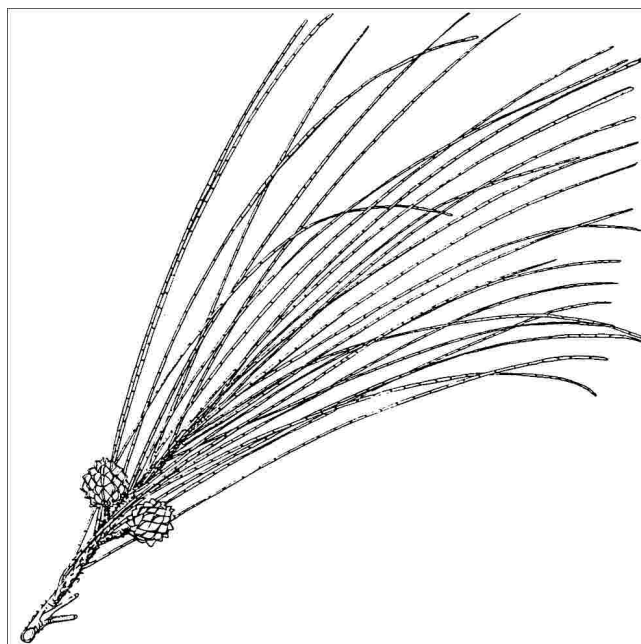


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

Highly salt- and drought-tolerant, Australian-Pine was widely used in seaside landscapes as a windbreak, screen, clipped hedge, and for topiary. Its ability to withstand heat and other adverse conditions made Australian-Pine a favorite for street tree or specimen use also. It is not planted now due to the problems it has created including the elimination of habitat for native plants. Injured trees compartmentalize wounds poorly and decay advances rapidly through the trunk. Old trees which have been topped and abused often become hazardous and they can fall over or drop large limbs.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Australian-Pine will tolerate many adverse conditions, dry or wet soil, heat or high winds. Trees are hardy to about 25-degrees F. Vigorous sprouts often originate from the roots of older trees knocked back by the cold.

Pests

No pests are of major concern.

Diseases

Root rot.