

Pinus densiflora: Japanese Red Pine¹

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Introduction

Japanese Red Pine reaches a height and spread of 30 to 50 feet in the landscape growing much taller in the woods. Needles are arranged in pairs and remain on the tree for about three years. A distinguishing feature of this tree is the often crooked or sweeping trunk which shows reddish-orange peeling bark. Because lower branches are held nearly horizontal on the trunk forming a picturesque silhouette in the landscape it is used best as a specimen, not as a mass planting. Needles may turn yellowish during winter on some soils.

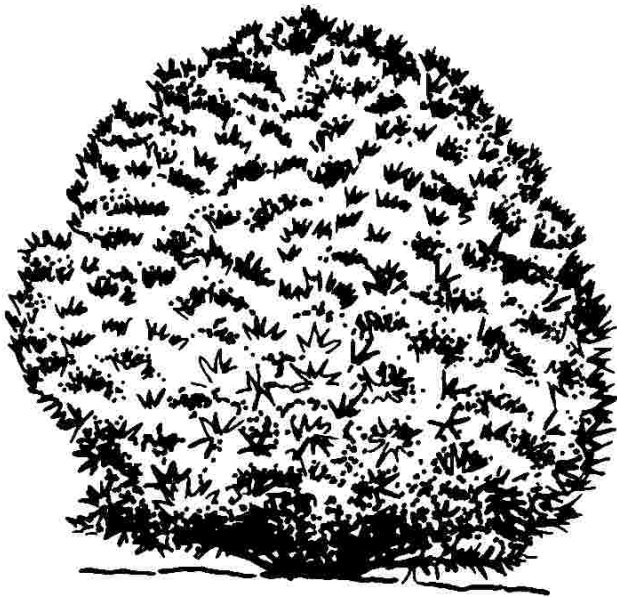


Figure 1. Young *Pinus densiflora*: Japanese Red Pine

General Information

Scientific name: *Pinus densiflora*

Pronunciation: PIE-nus den-sih-FLOR-uh

Common name(s): Japanese Red Pine

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 3B through 7A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: specimen; Bonsai

Availability: not native to North America



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 30 to 50 feet

Spread: 30 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: oval

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Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: fragrant, evergreen, needled evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, cone
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: tan
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

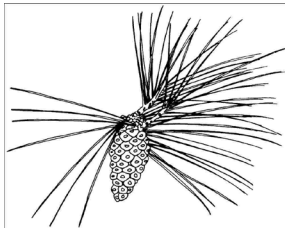


Figure 3. Fruit

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; very showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: medium
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Other

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: yes
Outstanding tree: yes
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

The tree prefers a site with full sun and a well-drained, slightly acid soil. Clay soil is usually not suitable unless it is very well drained.

There are a few cultivars: 'Alboterminata' - yellowish needle tips; 'Aurea' - yellow needles; 'Oculus-draconis' - Dragon's Eye Pine - two yellow lines on needles; 'Umbraculifera' - Tanyosho Pine - 20 feet tall, multi-trunked.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

This tree is usually pest-free, with occasional scale, but the list of potential problems is long.

Diseases

Some of its diseases are needle blight and rusts. Canker diseases may cause dieback of landscape Pines. Keep trees healthy and prune out the infected branches.

Needle cast is common on small trees and plantation or forest trees. Infected needles yellow and fall off.