

Pinus taeda: Loblolly Pine¹

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Introduction

Loblolly Pine is a North American native which is usually seen from 50 to 80 feet tall with a 30-foot-spread though it is capable of reaching more than 150 feet in height. This extremely fast-growing pine is pyramidal when young making it ideal for screening but loses its lower limbs as it grows older becoming a tall, stately specimen, windbreak, or dappled-shade tree. The six to nine-inch-long evergreen needles turn light green to brown during the winter. The often-paired cones are three to six inches long, red/brown, and have very sharp spines. They persist on the tree for several years and mature in the fall. The bark of Loblolly Pine is very thick which helps make this tree very resistant to fire in the wild.

General Information

Scientific name: *Pinus taeda*

Pronunciation: PIE-nus TEE-duh

Common name(s): Loblolly Pine

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 9B (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: weedy native

Uses: screen; reclamation; specimen; shade

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 50 to 80 feet

Spread: 30 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

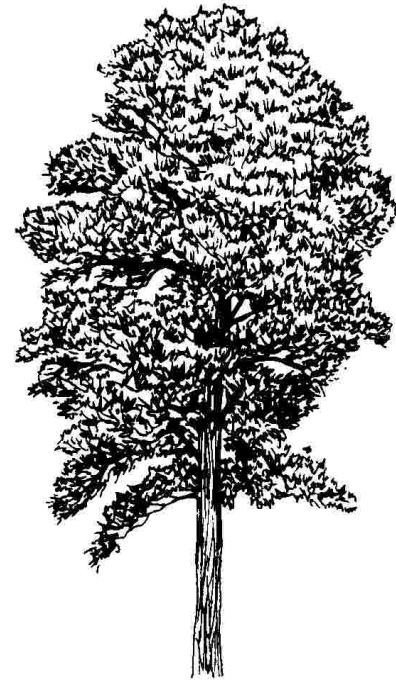


Figure 1. Mature *Pinus taeda*: Loblolly Pine

Crown shape: oval

Crown density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

1. This document is ENH-637, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed May 2011. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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Figure 2. Range

Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: fragrant, evergreen, needled evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches, 8 to 12 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: 3 to 6 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels/mammals; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thick, medium
Wood specific gravity: 0.51

Culture

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

Other

Roots: can form large surface roots

Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: no
Ozone sensitivity: sensitive
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

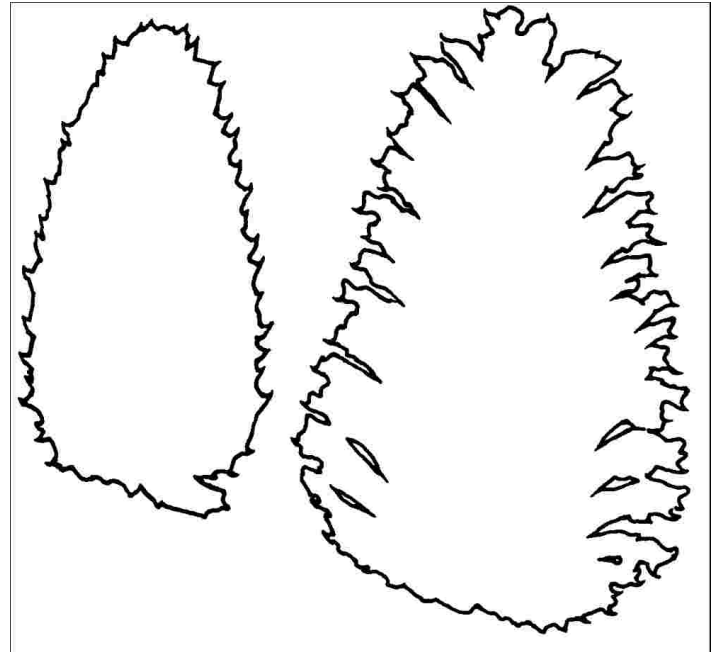


Figure 3. Fruit

Use and Management

Pines are often grouped together in a landscape and they are becoming more popular for planting in parks and in commercial landscapes. They create a light shade which allows grass and other plants to easily grow beneath the canopy. People often complain about the dropping needles, but these may be the same people who complain when it rains.

Loblolly Pine should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid soil. It is drought-tolerant once established.

The cultivar 'Nana' reaches only 8 to 16 feet in height making it ideal for use as a specimen or screen. It has a dense, rounded silhouette and may become popular, especially for small-scale landscapes, once people discover it.

Propagation is by seed. Young trees larger than four feet tall are very difficult to transplant.

Pests

Some of this tree's pests are pine bark beetle, borers, pine tip moth, and sawflies.

Diseases

Loblolly is susceptible to fusiform rust and heart rot.