Podocarpus falcatus: Podocarpus
Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

Introduction
Podocarpus falcatus grows very slowly, probably to 40 feet or more in an open landscape, but has reached 100 feet in its native habitat. The two-inch long, blue foliage borne on a rigid pyramidal canopy would make a striking specimen in any landscape. It casts dense shade when branched to the ground, so no grass grows beneath it. It lends a rigid, formal effect to any landscape due to the stiff, horizontal branches, but the blue foliage softens this effect. It could be used as a specimen or as a screen planted 10 to 15 feet apart.

General Information
Scientific name: Podocarpus falcatus
Pronunciation: poe-doe-KAR-pus fal-KAY-tus
Common name(s): Podocarpus
Family: Podocarpaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 10A through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Uses: specimen; highway median; screen; hedge
Availability: not native to North America

Description
Height: 30 to 40 feet
Spread: 25 to 35 feet

Figure 1. Middle-aged Podocarpus falcatus: Podocarpus
Credits: Ed Gilman

Figure 2. Range


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Crown uniformity: symmetrical
Crown shape: pyramidal
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: blue or blue-green, green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Figure 3. Foliage

Flower
Flower color: unknown
Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit
Fruit shape: round, oval
Fruit length: less than .5 inch, .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: medium
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture
Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other
Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: yes
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown
Pest resistance: unknown

Use and Management
The tree prefers a rich, moist soil, and benefits from irrigation in dry weather. Trees benefit from a layer of mulch extending beyond the edge of the branches. This keeps roots cool and reduces moisture loss from the soil. Grows in full sun or the shade on the north side of a building. This tree has not been grown in nurseries but should be tried.

Pests and Diseases
The tree has not been grown much and the pest and disease problems are poorly understood.