Tsuga canadensis ‘Sargentii’: Weeping Canadian Hemlock

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Introduction
Weeping Canadian hemlock may be one of the most beautiful conifers, with its soft green needles attached to gently weeping branches reaching to the ground. Specimen trees look their best with lower branches left on and touching the ground. The strong, conical form typical of the species is completely lost in this cultivar. The tree is usually trained to grow several feet tall then allowed to spread up to two times its height. In 80 years the tree may be 12 feet tall and 25 feet wide. It makes one of the most impressive accents or specimens of any tree available in this country. Unfortunately, infestations of woolly adelgid have been severe in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania (and other areas) and this may limit their use in these regions.

General Information
Scientific name: Tsuga canadensis
Pronunciation: TSOO-guh kan-uh-DEN-sis
Common name(s): Weeping Canadian hemlock, weeping eastern hemlock
Family: Pinaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 4A through 7A (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Uses: specimen; container or planter
Availability: not native to North America

Description
Height: 10 to 12 feet

Figure 1. Mature Tsuga canadensis ‘Sargentii’: weeping Canadian hemlock

Figure 2. Range
Tsuga canadensis 'Sargentii': Weeping Canadian Hemlock

Spread: 20 to 30 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular
Crown shape: weeping
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

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

**Culture**
- Light requirement: full sun, partial sun, partial shade, shade tolerant
- Soil tolerances: 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: sensitive to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**
Hemlock transplants well balled-in-burlap and will grow in moderately dry or moist, acidic soil but prefers moist, well-drained sites. Root rot and bark splitting are common on sites which are constantly wet. Some die-back can be expected after transplanting if irrigation is not managed just right. Best growth is in partial shade in the mountainous valleys but specimens grow well in full sun in the middle and northern part of their range. Perfect when partially shaded from other trees where soil is cool and some sun sneaks through during portions of the day. It is not for planting in a lawn in competition with turf unless turf is eliminated beneath the canopy. Plants grown in full shade will be thin and will not produce the specimen effect so characteristic of weeping hemlock in full sun or partial shade. This is a picky plant but well worth the extra effort to cultivate it.

Other cultivars include: 'Bennett'—globose habit, branches weeping at the tips, dark green, grow in partial shade, three-foot height and spread; 'White Gentsch'—a rounded, flattened dwarf, the foliage is white at the tips, four feet high and wide.

**Pests**
Woolly adelgid, scales, weevils, bagworm, mites, sapsucker woodpecker can infest hemlock. Woolly adelgid and scale infestations can devastate a planting.

**Diseases**
Needle rust, cankers, and non-parasitic bark splitting on heavy, poorly drained soil can cause some problems.