

# *Picea glauca* 'Conica' - Dwarf Alberta Spruce (*Pinaceae*)

*Picea glauca* 'Conica' is a common, small to medium, pyramidal evergreen shrub. Dwarf Alberta Spruce serves as a formal foundation shrub.

## FEATURES

### Form

- medium-sized evergreen specimen shrub
- to 10' tall x 3' wide and occasionally larger, but often smaller
- upright pyramidal growth habit
- very slow growth rate

### Culture

- full sun to partial sun
- best performance occurs in full sun in a moist, well-drained soil, sited a few feet away from any other hardscape structure, plant, or artificial irrigation, so that airflow and sunshine will remove moisture from the very dense foliage
- not tolerant of urban stresses (especially to pollution, winter salt spray, continuously dry soils, high light reflection, and heat) to which it is often exposed
- propagated by rooted stem cuttings
- a few serious pest (and possibly also disease) problems that, when coupled with the overplanting of this formal shrub, serve to render it as an eventual liability in the landscape
- insects (especially mites) will infest the plant sooner or later, especially in areas of the shrub that are more prone to repeated spring and summer wetness (such as the backside of the shrub next to a wall or foundation); infestations will lead to localized stem and needle death, which will make the plant very unsightly; for this reason, Dwarf Alberta Spruce should only be used with discretion in areas with good air circulation and possibly with an annual pesticide preventive application program
- reversion to the species form will rarely occur as a prominent shoot with thicker stems and much larger foliage; this should be pruned away at just below the point of origination, as it will predominate that section of the shrub and alter its formal appearance
- abundantly available in container form



### Foliage

- light green, very thin needles to 0.5" long
- radiating around the stem

### Flowers

- inconspicuous; monoecious

### Fruits

- few (if any) small cones

### Twigs

- light brown

### Trunk

- thin gray scales with age; hidden

## USAGE

### Function

- specimen, foundation, or focal point shrub

### Texture

- fine texture
- thick density

### Assets

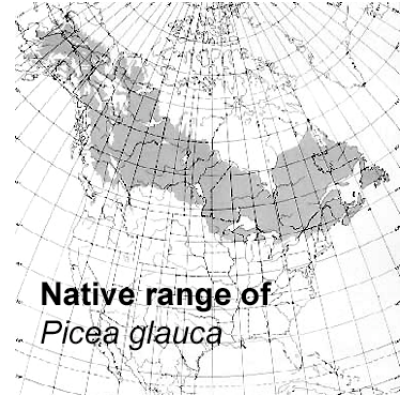
- excellent formal specimen shrub
- slow growth allows it to be a low-maintenance foundation shrub

### Liabilities

- some insects are occasional problems (especially mites)
- not urban tolerant

### Habitat

- Zone 2
- Native to Canada and the Northern U.S. (cultivar discovered in Alberta, Canada)



## SELECTIONS

### Alternates

-small pyramidal evergreen shrubs; since Dwarf Alberta Spruce is so overused and so prone to mite infestation, the following partial list yields specific examples, some of which must be occasionally sheared to maintain a relatively dwarf, pyramidal habit:

- Buxus* 'Green Mountain' (to 3' tall)
- Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* 'Glauca' (to 10' tall)
- Ilex x meserveae* (several male and female cultivars exist of this broadleaf evergreen shrub, which can be sheared at an early age into pyramidal form, and must be annually sheared to maintain this shape; to 10' tall)
- Taxus cuspidata* 'Capitata' (to 12' tall or more)
- Thuja occidentalis* 'Emerald' ('Smaragd') (to 12' tall or more)

### Cultivars - Variants - Related species

- Picea glauca* 'Jean's Dilly' - a shorter form of Alberta Spruce (to 5' tall), with needles that are concentrated at the ends of each season's short stem growth, and with a distinctive twist to the needles
- Picea glauca* Rainbow's End™ - to 8' tall, with a second flush of growth in midseason being yellowish green to cream-yellow in foliage color



### Larger forms of the species

-*Picea glauca* - White Spruce - the species form, which is a slow-growing evergreen conifer to 40' x 20', having pale green needles to 0.75" long (form at left)

-*Picea glauca* var. *densata*- Black Hills Spruce - a slower growing,

more dense and formal variety of the species tree form, to 20' x 10'