Pinus sylvestris - Scotch Pine (Pinaceae)

Pinus sylvestris is a bluish-green foliaged, densely branching, irregular habit pine with orange bark on the upper half of the tree. Scotch Pine is an evergreen tree with ornamental bark and bold character of growth habit.

FEATURES

Form
- large tree
- 50’ tall x 30’ wide
- irregular pyramidal in youth, becoming flat-topped, scalloped, and open with maturity
- medium rate

Culture
- full sun to partial shade
- dry site tolerant
- sometimes sheared during nursery production (or Christmas tree production) for a fuller, more dense appearance at transplanting
- however, Scotch Pine is often not sheared since it is naturally dense and slower growing than most evergreen trees

Foliage
- fascicle of 2 bluish-green needles (sometimes yellow-green)
- to 3” long, stiff or twisting
- persisting for 3 yrs. on the stems
- blue-green evergreen

Flowers
- staminate flowers are clustered short catkins
- pistillate flowers green
- Apr.-May
- often unnoticed

Fruits
- 2” brown cones

Twigs
- green when young, becoming brown and rough by the second year

Trunk
- fissured gray to red-brown at the base, but becoming orange and exfoliating on the upper half of the tree
- ornamental orange bark is quite characteristic of this tree as it matures

USAGE

Function
- evergreen tree
- specimen tree
- focal point (orange bark and irregular open crown)

Texture
- medium texture in youth, bold texture with age
- thick density

Assets
- bluish-green stiff to twisted foliage
- pyramidal growth habit in youth, becoming picturesque with an irregular crown with age
- vivid light orange bark on upper half of tree
- popular Christmas tree

Liabilities
- various diseases and pests
- these often cause a slow-growing, stunted, stubby tree

Habitat
- Zones 3 to 7
- Native to Europe and Asia

SELECTIONS

Alternates
- coniferous evergreen trees with character and/or bark color (Pinus bungeana, P. densiflora 'Umbraculifera', P. cembra, etc.)

Cultivars – Variants – Related species
- straight species is the most common form
- there are a few minor cultivars such as 'Aurea' which has light green summer foliage and a yellow winter color; 'Fastigiata' a narrow columnar (4’ wide) form that may be 15-20’ tall; and 'Watereri' a 10-20’ x 10-20’ spread, flat-topped, deeply blue, slow-growing clone.

Note: this pine is one of the most popular Christmas trees, as it is densely foliaged and pyramidal when very young
- known in forestry as 'Scot's Pine'