

Pinus densiflora 'Pendula' Weeping Japanese Red Pine¹

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Introduction

Japanese red pine reaches a height and spread of 30 to 50 feet in the landscape, growing much taller in the woods. Needles are arranged in pairs and remain on the tree for about three years. A distinguishing feature of this tree is the often crooked or sweeping trunk which shows reddish-orange peeling bark. Because lower branches are held nearly horizontal on the trunk forming a picturesque silhouette in the landscape, it is used best as a specimen, not as a mass planting. Needles may turn yellowish during winter on some soils.

General Information

Scientific name: *Pinus densiflora* 'Pendula'

Pronunciation: PYE-nuss den-siff-FLOR-ruh

Common name(s): weeping Japanese red pine

Family: *Pinaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 3B through 7A (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: bonsai

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Plant habit: weeping; spreading

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: tan

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; no thorns

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; well-drained; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: not applicable

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter

trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The tree prefers a site with full sun and a well-drained, slightly acid soil. Clay soil is usually not suitable unless it is very well drained.

There are a few cultivars: 'Alboterminata' - yellowish needle tips; 'Aurea' - yellow needles; 'Oculis-draconis' - dragon's eye pine - two yellow lines on needles; 'Umbraculifera' - Tanyosho pine - 20 feet tall, multi-trunked.

Propagation is by seed.

This tree is usually pest-free, with occasional scale, but the list of potential problems is long.

Pests and Diseases

Some of its diseases are needle blight and rusts. Canker diseases may cause dieback of landscape pines. Keep trees healthy and prune out the infected branches.

Needle cast is common on small trees and plantation or forest trees. Infected needles yellow and fall off.