


Colorado Spruce (*Picea pungens*)

An evergreen tree from the Pine Family (Pinaceae)

 zone	 mature spread	 mature height	 growth rate	 sun	 tree shape	 soil type
3-7	25'	50'	slow medium	full	upright pyramidal	moist , acidic soils



Colorado Spruce, native to regions of the Rocky Mountains in the western and southwestern United States, is planted throughout the United States and Canada as an ornamental evergreen, including all of Ohio. Although it is commonly seen in forms that display blue or blue-silver needles, green-needled forms also exist. Many selections have been made for both foliage color and growth habit, the latter of which may be dwarf, weeping, broad, columnar, or formally pyramidal into maturity. Tree forms are not usually limbed up, but allowed to branch to the ground throughout their life. Most trees may easily reach 50 feet tall by 25 feet wide at the base, although in the wild much taller specimens are commonly reached. Perhaps no other evergreen tree is as cherished for home landscapes as Blue Spruce, its more common name in the nursery industry. As a member of the Pine Family, it is related to other Spruces, as well as the Firs, Larches, Pines, and Hemlocks.

Planting Requirements - prefers moist, acidic soils that may be organic, sandy, or loamy; the soils must not be poorly drained or wet. It is also adaptable to a variety of less than favorable conditions, including poor, clay, rocky, dry soils of acidic, neutral, or alkaline pH. It survives under seasonal drought once it is established, and takes well to city pollution. It grows in full sun to partial sun in zones 3 to 7.

Potential Problems - generally a healthy tree, and like most spruces, it suffers needle damage due to feeding by various spider mites. It also is subject to spruce gall aphid, causing its branch tips to die back, and several other diseases and pests may cause minor problems. It is especially drought tolerant, including young transplants that have been root-pruned into ball and burlap form.

Leaf Identification Features



Colorado Spruce, among the three most common spruces found in Ohio, has the longest and sharpest needles, and they radiate outward from the twig (left), rather than point forward. As with all evergreens, the new needles of spring have a strikingly lighter color as compared to the growth of previous seasons.



the nursery industry).

While many Colorado Spruce occur as the blue to blue-silver foliated forms, this species exhibits great variation in needle color, caused by the amount of wax that covers the surface of the needles. Some forms have the traditional blue or blue-silver colors (and are usually referred to as Blue Spruce), while others are distinctly green (and are called Green Spruce in



This spruce has cones that are different from the other spruces, as they have flaky scales that are thin and flexible, rather than stiff and rigid (as with all evergreens, various structures can have the whitish sap drip on them, including the cones that are shown).



Colorado Spruce is monoecious, with male flowers scattered throughout the canopy serving a source of pollen for the female flowers (immature cones).



There are many forms of Colorado Spruce in terms of growth habit - these include dwarf globes that serve as landscape shrubs, weeping forms that cascade, and narrow columns that serve as evergreen accents



Mature bark of Colorado Spruce is often never seen, as this tree is usually allowed to branch to the ground throughout its life. The bark tends to be gray to brown, with moderate ridges and flakes that become thin plates with age.