



Pinus cembroides Mexican Pinyon¹

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INTRODUCTION

A native North American tree, Mexican Pinyon is usually found 20 to 30 feet tall with a spread of 15 to 20 feet, although it may sometimes be larger (Fig. 1). It forms a compact, conical silhouette, producing a rounded canopy with age, and the lower branches are maintained on the tree, providing dense cover to the ground unless shaded-out by other growth. The stiff, blue/green needles are 1 to 1.5 inches long and the small, one to two-inch, yellow or red/brown cones mature and drop in autumn. The seeds found within the cones are quite popular with many birds and mammals - including man. Eaten either raw or toasted, Pinyon Pine nuts have a wonderful flavor.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Pinus cembroides*

Pronunciation: PIE-nus sem-BROY-deez

Common name(s): Mexican Pinyon, Pinyon Pine

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

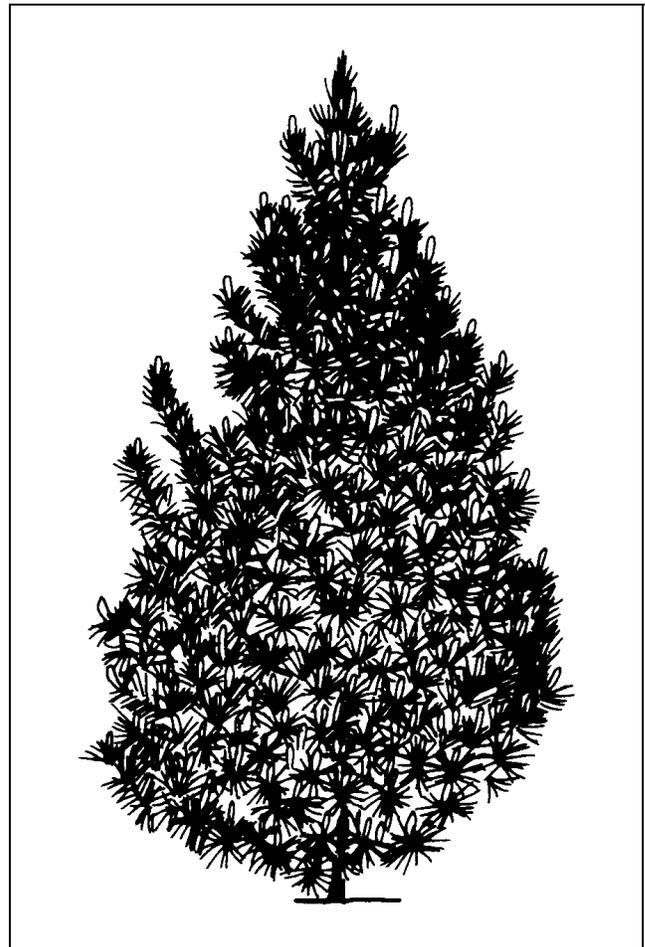


Figure 1. Young Mexican Pinyon.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate; spiral (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen; fragrant; needle leaf evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green; green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red; yellow

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular; oval; round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant



Figure 3. Foliage of Mexican Pinyon.

Current year twig color: gray

Current year twig thickness: medium; thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Mexican Pinyon should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil, tolerating dry, poor, alkaline soils but not wet soils. It is probably best not to irrigate this tree much after it is established in the landscape.

Pests

One pest of Mexican Pinyon is the Pine tip moth. Although it will kill some new growth, the result is simply to make the tree more compact since it has a pruning effect.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.