

Tsuga canadensis 'Sargentii' Weeping Canadian Hemlock¹

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INTRODUCTION

Weeping Canadian Hemlock may be one of the most beautiful conifers, with its soft green needles attached to gently weeping branches reaching to the ground (Fig. 1). Specimen trees look their best with lower branches left on and touching the ground. The strong, conical form typical of the species is completely lost in this cultivar. The tree is usually trained to grow several feet tall then allowed to spread up to two times its height. In 80 years the tree may be 12 feet tall and 25 feet wide. It makes one of the most impressive accents or specimens of any tree available in this country. Unfortunately, infestations of woolly adelgid have been severe in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania (and other areas) and this may limit their use in these regions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Tsuga canadensis* 'Sargentii'

Pronunciation: TSOO-guh kan-uh-DEN-sis

Common name(s): Weeping Canadian Hemlock, Weeping Eastern Hemlock

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 7A (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

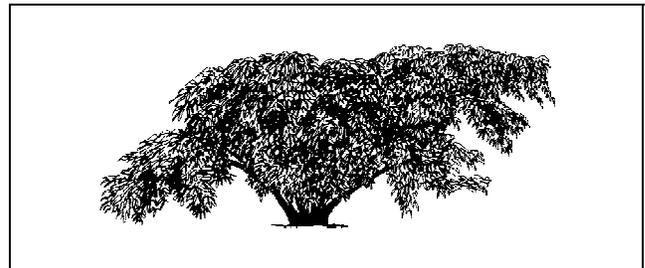


Figure 1. Mature Weeping Canadian Hemlock.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 10 to 12 feet

Spread: 20 to 30 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: weeping

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

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

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Flower

Flower color: green; yellow

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown; gray

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: 0.40

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Soil salt tolerance: poor

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

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

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics



Figure 3. Foliage of Weeping Canadian Hemlock.

some sun sneaks through during portions of the day. It is not for planting in a lawn in competition with turf unless turf is eliminated beneath the canopy. Plants grown in full shade will be thin and will not produce the specimen effect so characteristic of Weeping Hemlock in full sun or partial shade. This is a picky plant but well worth the extra effort to cultivate it.

Other cultivars include: 'Bennett' - globose habit, branches weeping at the tips, dark green, grow in partial shade, three-foot height and spread; 'White Gentsch' - a rounded, flattened dwarf, the foliage is white at the tips, four feet high and wide.

Pests

Woolly adelgid, scales, weevils, bagworm, mites, sapsucker woodpecker can infest Hemlock. Woolly adelgid and scale infestations can devastate a planting.

Diseases

Needle rust, cankers, and non-parasitic bark splitting on heavy, poorly drained soil can cause some problems.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Hemlock transplants well balled-in-burlap and will grow in moderately dry or moist, acidic soil but prefers moist, well-drained sites. Root rot and bark splitting are common on sites which are constantly wet. Some die-back can be expected after transplanting if irrigation is not managed just right. Best growth is in partial shade in the mountainous valleys but specimens grow well in full sun in the middle and northern part of their range. Perfect when partially shaded from other trees where soil is cool and