



Araucaria bidwillii False Monkey-Puzzletree¹

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INTRODUCTION

This large evergreen has a single upright trunk, tiered branching habit, and a pyramidal or columnar shape (Fig. 1). Eventually reaching a height of about 80 feet, False Monkey Puzzle possesses a moderate growth rate. The tree would grow taller, but lightning frequently limits height growth in the eastern U.S. The dark green, two-inch-long, individual leaves are lanceolate when young becoming 1/2-inch ovals at maturity. Both leaf types appear on the tree at the same time. The large, spiny, 10 to 15-pound cones are rare in cultivation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Araucaria bidwillii*
Pronunciation: air-ah-KAIR-ee-uh bid-WILL-ee-eye
Common name(s): False Monkey-Puzzletree
Family: *Araucariaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: suitable for growing indoors; specimen
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 60 to 80 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: columnar; pyramidal
Crown density: moderate

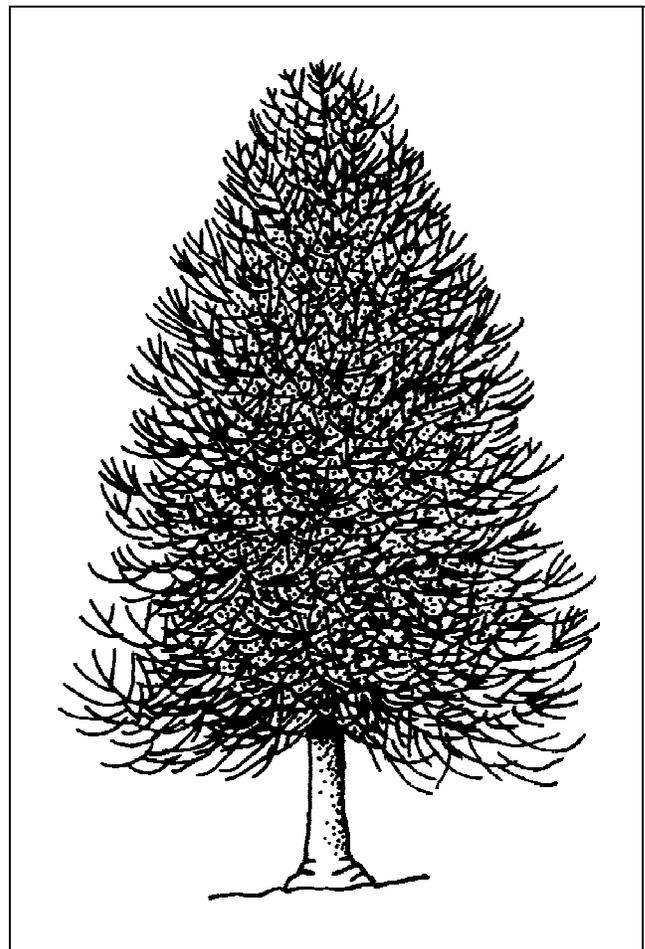


Figure 1. Mature False Monkey-Puzzletree.

Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** spiral (Fig. 3)
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** lanceolate; linear; needle-like (filiform)
- Leaf venation:** parallel
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen; needle leaf evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** oval
- Fruit length:** 6 to 12 inches; 3 to 6 inches
- Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

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
- Current year twig color:** brown
- Current year twig thickness:** medium

Culture

- Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
- Drought tolerance:** high
- Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

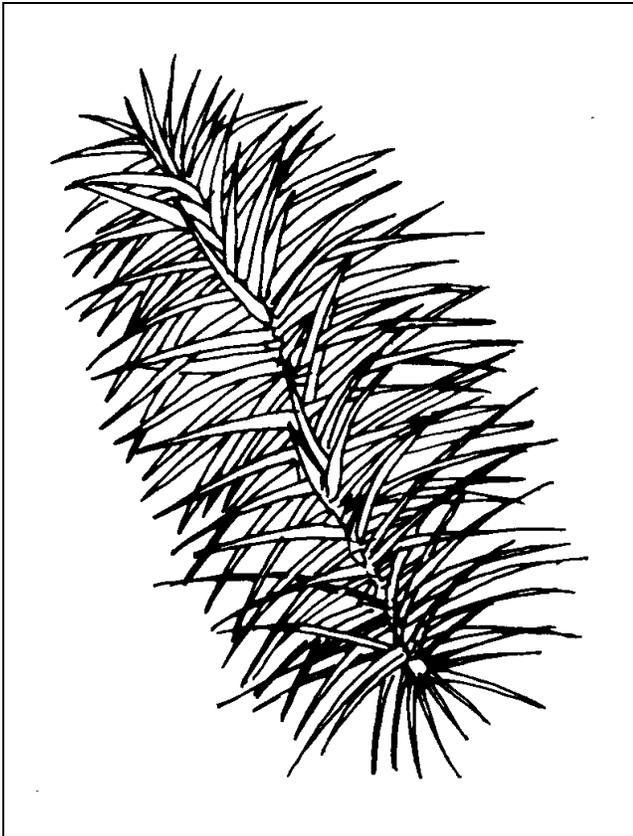


Figure 3. Foliage of False Monkey-Puzzletree.

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

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

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Although they provide some shade, they are not suitable for patios or terraces because they are too large and large surface roots are common. In addition, the columnar-formed trees generally cast limited shade due to the narrow crown. Many people forget how tall these trees grow. They often have an attractive pyramidal form (like a fir or spruce tree) when they are small, but they quickly grow too tall for most residential sites. This tree is best saved for large-scale landscapes like parks and municipal buildings.

Growing best in full sun locations, this tree thrives on a variety of soils and is moderately salt tolerant. Young plants should be watered well, especially

during periods of drought. Be sure to prune out multiple trunks or leaders as they should be grown with one central leader.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings of erect shoot tips only.

Pests

Scale and sooty mold are minor problems.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern. Leaf spots are a minor problem.