



# *Araucaria bidwillii* False Monkey-Puzzletree<sup>1</sup>

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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

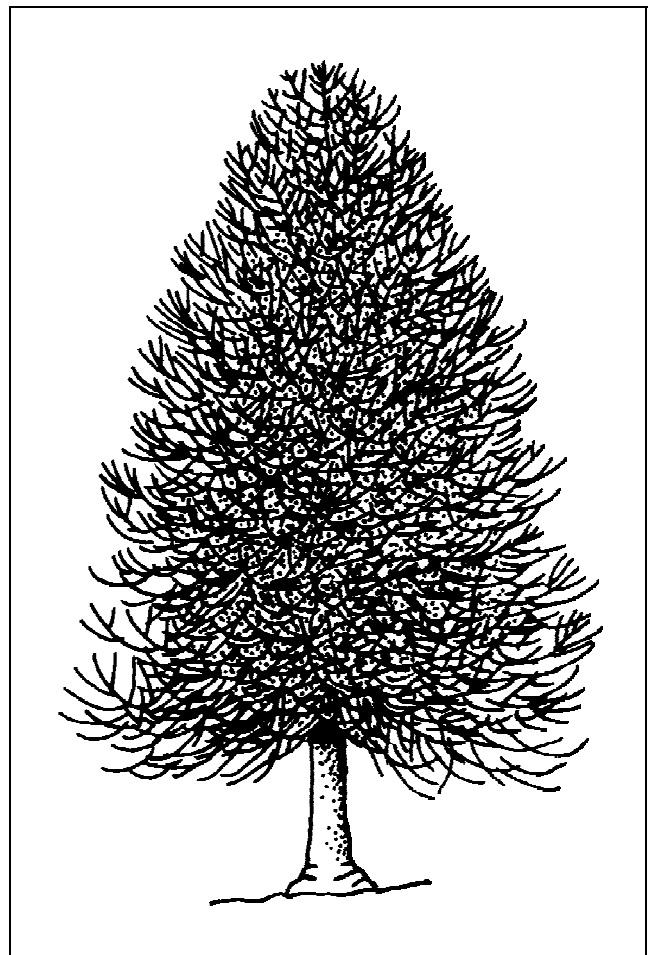


Figure 1. Mature False Monkey-Puzzletree.

**Growth rate:** medium  
**Texture:** fine

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-82, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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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

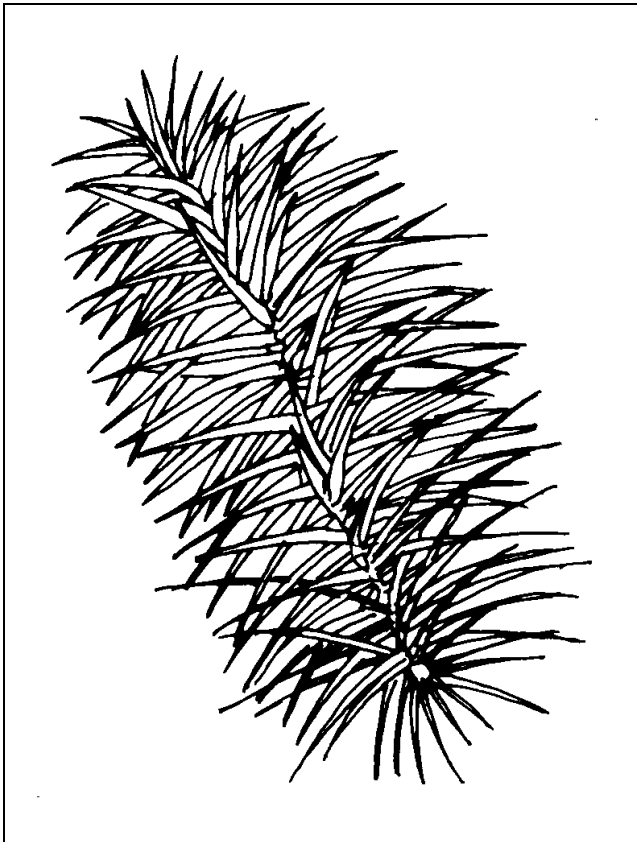


Figure 3. Foliage of False Monkey-Puzzletree.

### 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.