



# *Pinus densiflora* Japanese Red Pine<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Japanese Red Pine reaches a height and spread of 30 to 50 feet in the landscape growing much taller in the woods (Fig. 1). Needles are arranged in pairs and remain on the tree for about three years. A distinguishing feature of this tree is the often crooked or sweeping trunk which shows reddish-orange peeling bark. Because lower branches are held nearly horizontal on the trunk forming a picturesque silhouette in the landscape it is used best as a specimen, not as a mass planting. Needles may turn yellowish during winter on some soils.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Pinus densiflora*

**Pronunciation:** PIE-nus den-sih-FLOR-uh

**Common name(s):** Japanese Red Pine

**Family:** *Pinaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 3B through 7A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** Bonsai; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 30 to 50 feet

**Spread:** 30 to 50 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

**Crown shape:** oval

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** medium

**Texture:** fine

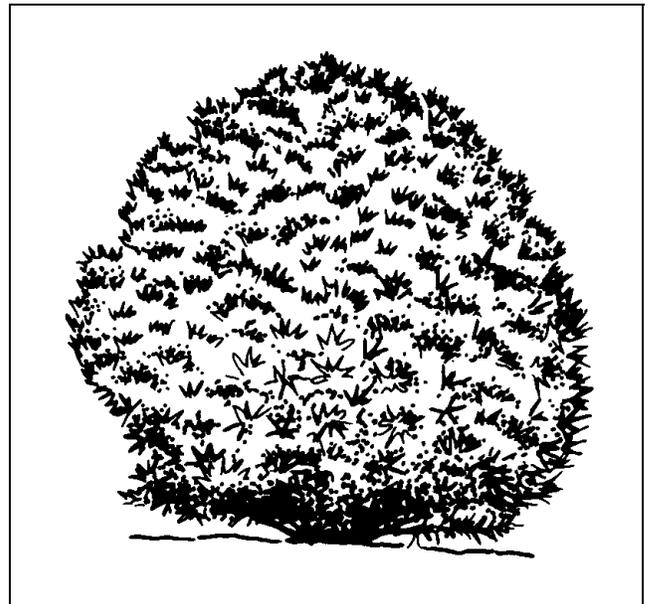


Figure 1. Young Japanese Red Pine.

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate; spiral

**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:** 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 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:** yellow

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval (Fig. 3)

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** tan

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; very showy trunk; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

**Current year twig color:** green

**Current year twig thickness:** medium

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun

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

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

**Soil salt tolerance:** poor

### Other

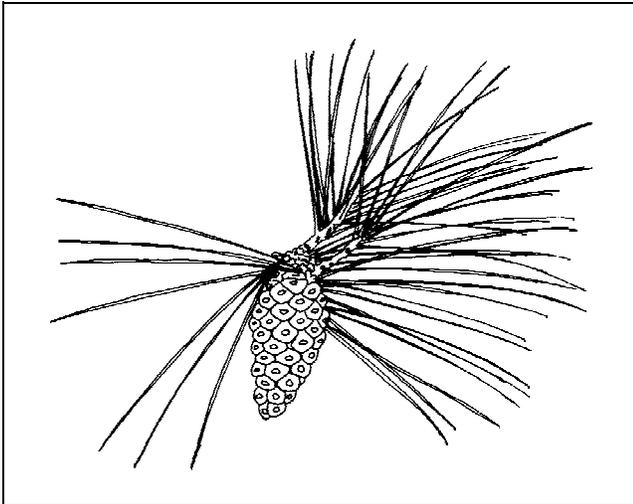
**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**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



**Figure 3.** Fruit of Japanese Red Pine.

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

### **USE AND MANAGEMENT**

The tree prefers a site with full sun and a well-drained, slightly acid soil. Clay soil is usually not suitable unless it is very well drained.

There are a few cultivars: 'Alboterminata' - yellowish needle tips; 'Aurea' - yellow needles; 'Oculus-draconis' - Dragon's Eye Pine - two yellow lines on needles; 'Umbraculifera' - Tanyosho Pine - 20 feet tall, multi-trunked.

Propagation is by seed.

### **Pests**

This tree is usually pest-free, with occasional scale, but the list of potential problems is long.

### **Diseases**

Some of its diseases are needle blight and rusts. Canker diseases may cause dieback of landscape Pines. Keep trees healthy and prune out the infected branches.

Needle cast is common on small trees and plantation or forest trees. Infected needles yellow and fall off.