



Pinus taeda Loblolly Pine¹

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INTRODUCTION

Loblolly Pine is a North American native which is usually seen from 50 to 80 feet tall with a 30-foot-spread though it is capable of reaching more than 150 feet in height (Fig. 1). This extremely fast-growing pine is pyramidal when young making it ideal for screening but loses its lower limbs as it grows older becoming a tall, stately specimen, windbreak, or dappled-shade tree. The six to nine-inch-long evergreen needles turn light green to brown during the winter. The often-paired cones are three to six inches long, red/brown, and have very sharp spines. They persist on the tree for several years and mature in the fall. The bark of Loblolly Pine is very thick which helps make this tree very resistant to fire in the wild.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Pinus taeda*

Pronunciation: PIE-nus TEE-duh

Common name(s): Loblolly Pine

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 9 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: reclamation plant; screen; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

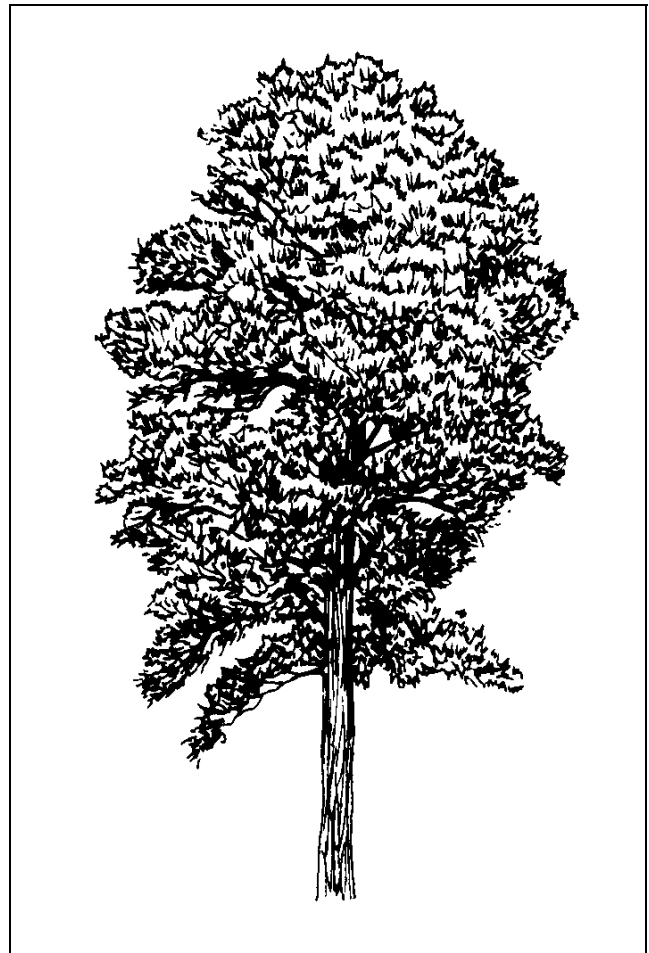


Figure 1. Mature Loblolly Pine.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 80 feet

Spread: 30 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown shape: oval
Crown density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

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: 8 to 12 inches; 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval (Fig. 3)
Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; 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: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium; thick
Wood specific gravity: 0.51

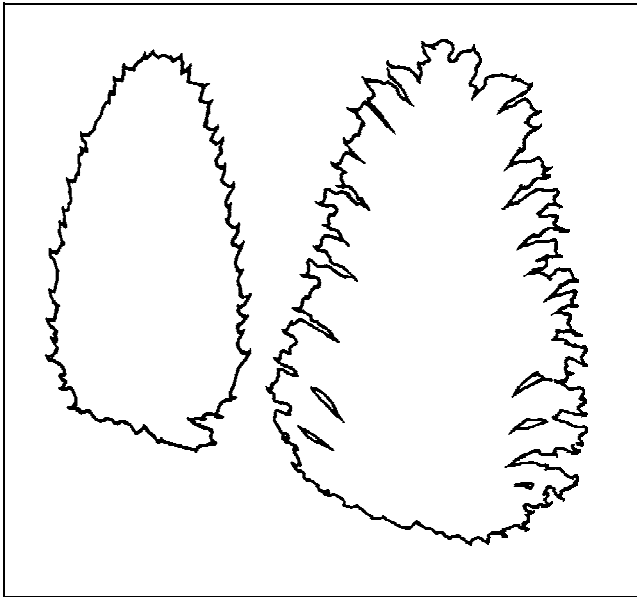


Figure 3. Fruit of Loblolly Pine.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: seeds itself into the landscape

Ozone sensitivity: sensitive or moderately tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Pines are often grouped together in a landscape and they are becoming more popular for planting in parks and in commercial landscapes. They create a light shade which allows grass and other plants to easily grow beneath the canopy. People often complain about the dropping needles, but these may be the same people who complain when it rains.

Loblolly Pine should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid soil. It is drought-tolerant once established.

The cultivar 'Nana' reaches only 8 to 16 feet in height making it ideal for use as a specimen or screen. It has a dense, rounded silhouette and may become popular, especially for small-scale landscapes, once people discover it.

Propagation is by seed. Young trees larger than four feet tall are very difficult to transplant.

Pests

Some of this tree's pests are pine bark beetle, borers, pine tip moth, and sawflies.

Diseases

Loblolly is susceptible to fusiform rust and heart rot.