



Podocarpus falcatus Podocarpus¹

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INTRODUCTION

Podocarpus falcatus grows very slowly, probably to 40 feet or more in an open landscape, but has reached 100 feet in its native habitat (Fig. 1). The two-inch long, blue foliage borne on a rigid pyramidal canopy would make a striking specimen in any landscape. It casts dense shade when branched to the ground, so no grass grows beneath it. It lends a rigid, formal effect to any landscape due to the stiff, horizontal branches, but the blue foliage softens this effect. It could be used as a specimen or as a screen planted 10 to 15 feet apart.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Podocarpus falcatus*

Pronunciation: poe-doe-KAR-pus fal-KAY-tus

Common name(s): Podocarpus

Family: *Podocarpaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: hedge; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 25 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

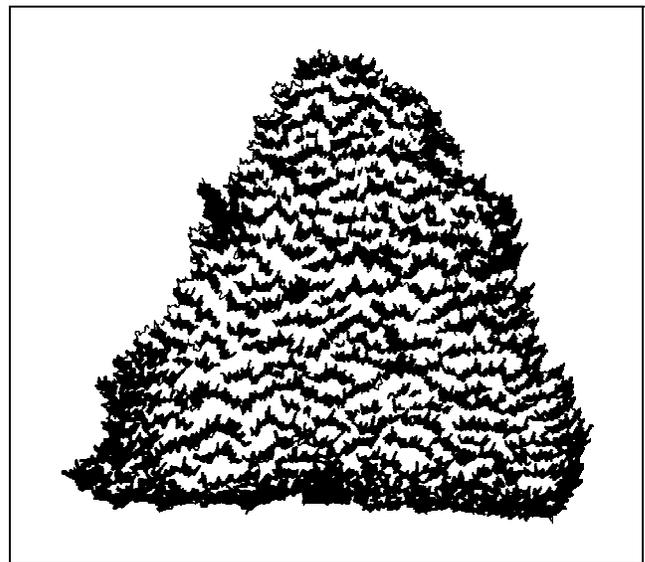


Figure 1. Middle-aged Podocarpus.

Crown shape: pyramidal

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green; green

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch; < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

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: green

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

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

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

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

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

Pest resistance: unknown

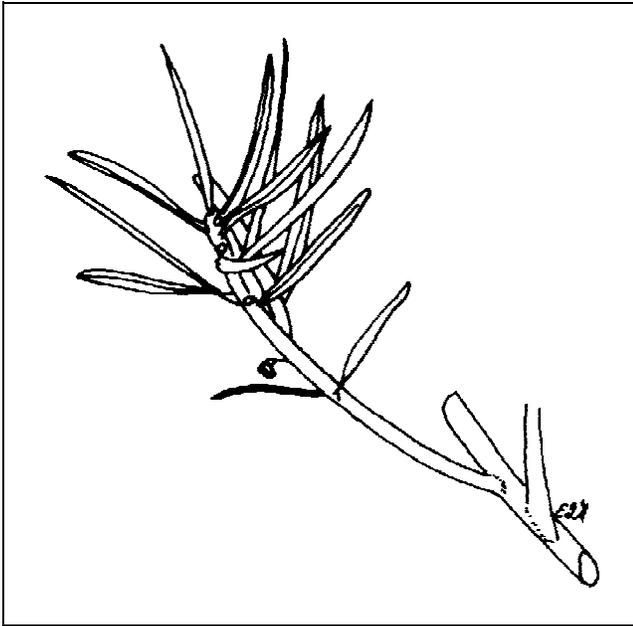


Figure 3. Foliage of Podocarpus.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The tree prefers a rich, moist soil, and benefits from irrigation in dry weather. Trees benefit from a layer of mulch extending beyond the edge of the branches. This keeps roots cool and reduces moisture loss from the soil. Grows in full sun or the shade on the north side of a building. This tree has not been grown in nurseries but should be tried.

Pests and Diseases

The tree has not been grown much and the pest and disease problems are poorly understood.