



# *Podocarpus falcatus* **Podocarpus**<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## 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

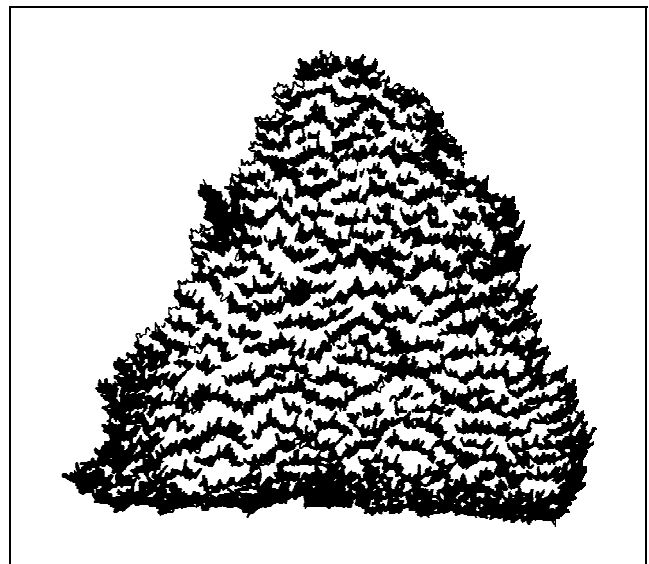


Figure 1. Middle-aged Podocarpus.

**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**

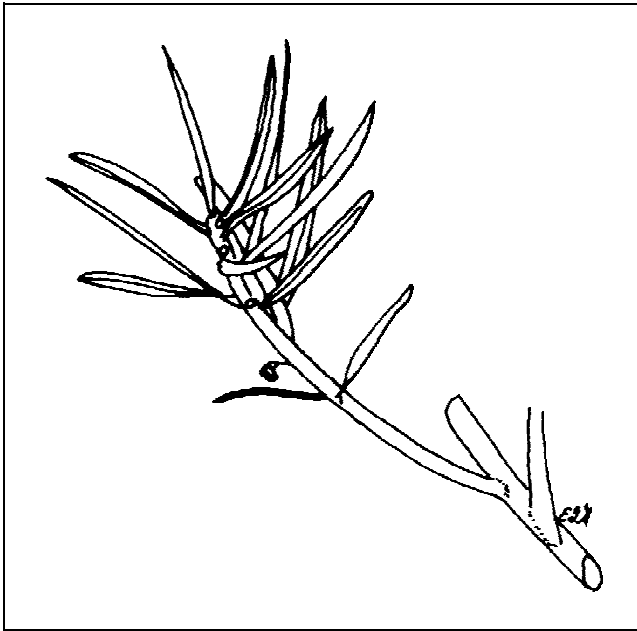
**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**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.