

JAPANESE BLACK PINE

Pinus thunbergiana Franco

plant symbol = PITH3

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Northeast Plant Materials Program

Alternate Names

Pinus thunbergii Parl.

Uses

Japanese black pine had been among the best species for planting along Northeastern seashores until about 1990. The species has suffered from insects and diseases and has fallen rapidly in esteem.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Japanese black pine is an introduced evergreen. In its most favorable habitat, Japanese black pine can reach a height of 100 feet, but in beach plantings, it is usually less than 20 feet tall. Its spreading, loosely swaying branches are orange-yellow in color, and form an irregular silhouette. The blackish-gray bark is furrowed into irregular plates. Its evergreen foliage consists of bright green bundles of 2 stiff, sharp-pointed needles, 3-5 inches long. The large, grayish-white terminal buds are oblong, with fringed scales at the tips. After 4 or 5 years of age, nut-brown colored, short-stalked cones, 2-3 inches long, are produced. Fruiting and seed production are usually prolific. There are 34,000 seeds per pound.

Adaptation and Distribution

This pine is adaptable and will grow on a wide variety of soils under adverse conditions. Japanese black pine exhibits excellent drought tolerance but poor shade tolerance; it tolerates moderately well-drained soils. This pine is more salt-spray resistant than any of the native pines.

Japanese black pine is distributed primarily throughout the eastern United States. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Establishment

Japanese black pine typically grows on medium fertility, slightly acid, loamy to sandy soils. Establishment is by planting bare-root or container-grown plants 2-3 years old. On sand dunes, the use of container-grown plants is recommended. It may be established using bare-root two-year-old seedlings where soil and moisture conditions are good for plant establishment. It is desirable to dig a hole 2-3 times larger than the container, backfill with peat moss, then mix thoroughly with the sand. Place the roots in the hole and backfill around them. Water immediately. Japanese black pine is grown in nurseries from seed, using conventional propagation practices.

Management

Some protection from strong winds the first and second years may improve survival. Average growth is 12-18 inches per year.

Pests and Potential Problems

European pine shoot moth (*Rhyacionia buolinana*) frequently kills terminal growth of young trees, resulting in irregularly formed trees. Japanese black pine is also susceptible to red-pine scale (*Matsucoccus resinosa*).

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

USDA NRCS Northeast Plant Materials Program

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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