

Picea omorika

Serbian Spruce, Pančić spruce



Picea omorika (Serbian spruce) is a medium-sized, evergreen conifer with a pronounced columnar growth habit that can reach a height of around twenty to thirty metres, four metres wide. It was discovered and first described in 1875 by Josif Pančić, the founder of Serbian botany, and later by Czech botanist Emanuel von Purkyně. Before the last ice age *Picea omorika* was far more widespread in Europe. Today, its natural range is very much confined to the limestone cliffs of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and is endangered. Here, Serbian spruce grows alongside *Fagus sylvatica*, *Ostrya carpinifolia*, *Pinus nigra* and *Picea abies*. It is used as an ornamental tree and as a source of timber and also grown commercially as a Christmas tree.

The needles of *Picea omorika* are short, flat, dark green and greyish on the underside thanks to the two white stripes, giving the tree a silvery appearance. The decorative cones are egg-shaped/conical and have a beautiful purple colour when young and remain hanging on the tree for a long time. The seeds are distributed by the wind. It is a single-stem tree with a stunning columnar growth habit with strictly weeping branches and upwardly ascending tips. The bark is russet brown and peels off in greyish platelets.

Picea omorika is a magnificent, highly ornamental tree with a very striking, spire-like growth habit. Serbian spruce is suitable for medium-sized to larger gardens and parks but can also be planted in small spaces although is best admired from a distance. It grows just as well on acidic and alkaline soils and both sandy and rocky ground. Harsh winters and shade are not a problem for this tree.

SEASONAL COLOURS



TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, feathered trees, conifers

USE

Location: park, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones, countryside | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** shade-tolerant

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: columnar, narrow pyramidal | **Crown structure:** dense | **Height:** 20 - 30 m | **Width:** 2 - 4 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 4A - 8B

ASPECTS

Wind: intolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil, all soils | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade, shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** birds, owls, small mammals | **Extreme environments:** tolerates air pollution

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: raceme, pendulous | **Flower colour:** red-violet | **Flowering period:** May - May | **Leaf colour:** dark green, underside grey-green | **Leaves:** evergreen, needles or scales, short needles, small, scented | **Fruits:** striking, cones | **Fruit colour:** wine red, red-violet, violet | **Bark colour:** brown, grey | **Bark:** peeling, smooth | **Twig colour:** brown | **Twigs:** bare, horizontal branches, pendulous | **Root system:** shallow