

Pinus wallichiana

Bhutan pine, blue pine, Himalayan pine, Himalayan white pine



Pinus wallichiana (Himalayan pine) occurs naturally at high elevations in the Himalayas. Often, it is the first tree species to be found below the snow line growing in monocultures in forests but also mixed with *Betula utilis*, *Cedrus deodara* and *Juglans regia*. *Pinus wallichiana* was named after Danish doctor and botanist Nathaniel Wallich who sent the first seeds to Europe in 1827. In nature, the pine can attain monumental proportions of up to fifty metres; in cultivation, the tree often stays half the size. *Pinus wallichiana* has a vigorous upright main trunk with horizontal upward curving branches which create a very whimsical, wide pyramidal crown between twenty and thirty metres across.

The thin blue frosted needles up to twenty centimetres long are the most striking attribute of the Himalayan pine, and they are in groups of five. Where they are attached to the stem, they appear bent to create a pendulous appearance. This gives the crown a soft, almost weeping character despite the fact that the branch structure is quite rigid. The pendulous needles constitute an obvious difference compared with those of the otherwise very similar *Pinus strobus*. The pale brown cones differ too given that those of the Himalayan pine are up to thirty centimetres long and hang down when ripe. *Pinus wallichiana* blooms in April to May with upright, pale brown pollen cones. The tree has grey green twigs and a dark green, smooth bark which flakes on older specimens.

In nature, *Pinus wallichiana* grows in relatively sheltered mountain valleys in a climate of cold but dry winters and wet summers. For this reason, the species prefers a sunny spot or in partial shade somewhere that is not exposed to the wind where it is tolerant of air pollution. The soil must be acidic and free-draining but can range from moist to dry although the Himalayan pine is only somewhat drought tolerant. Thanks to its ultimate potential size and preferred growing conditions, *Pinus wallichiana* is primarily suited to park-like environments where it forms a superb addition with its whimsical crown shape and soft texture.

SEASONAL COLOURS



TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, feathered trees, conifers

USE

Location: park, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones | **Pavement:** none

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: wide pyramidal | **Crown structure:** open | **Height:** 15 - 25 m | **Width:** 20 - 30 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5A - 7B

ASPECTS

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

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: raceme, discrete, standing | **Flower colour:** light brown | **Flowering period:** April - May | **Leaf colour:** grey-blue, frosty blue, buds bright green | **Leaves:** evergreen, needles or scales, long needles | **Fruits:** striking, edible, large, cones | **Fruit colour:** pale brown, grey-brown | **Bark colour:** grey-black | **Bark:** peeling, smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour:** grey-green | **Twigs:** bare | **Root system:** shallow, extensive, tap root

