Araucaria araucana
Monkey-Puzzletree

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INTRODUCTION

Monkey-Puzzletree is a large, bizarre evergreen, 60 to 70 feet tall and 30 to 35 feet wide, which forms a loose, see-through, pyramidal shape with a straight trunk (Fig. 1). The tree is so open in habit you could almost look at it and not see it. The leaves are dark green, stiff, with sharp needles densely arranged on horizontal, irregular, upwardly-sweeping branches. Monkey-Puzzletree makes an attractive, novelty specimen for a large, open yard or commercial landscape. It is normally planted only as an oddity someplace in the rear of a landscape out of view from most passers-by but could be the specimen feature in a large oriental landscape.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Araucaria araucana
Pronunciation: air-ah-KAIR-ee-uh air-ah-KAY-nuh
Common name(s): Monkey-Puzzletree
Family: Araucariaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: suitable for growing indoors; specimen
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 60 to 70 feet
Spread: 30 to 35 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: pyramidal
Crown density: open

Figure 1. Mature Monkey-Puzzletree.
**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral (Fig. 3)
**Leaf type:** simple
**Leaf margin:** entire
**Leaf shape:** lanceolate; ovate
**Leaf venation:** parallel
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen; needle leaf evergreen
**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches
**Leaf color:** green
**Fall color:** no fall color change
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval
**Fruit length:** 6 to 12 inches; 3 to 6 inches
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard
**Fruit color:** brown; tan

**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:** brown; green
**Current year twig thickness:** medium; thick

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
**Drought tolerance:** moderate
Other

**Roots:** surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

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

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

Monkey-Puzzletree should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil and receive regular waterings. It tolerates some drought and will grow well in clay soil.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Scales, sooty mold, leaf spots.