**Araucaria heterophylla**
Norfolk-Island-Pine

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This large evergreen has a single upright trunk, tiered branching habit, and a narrow pyramidal or columnar shape (Fig. 1). Eventually reaching a height of about 80 feet, the tree possesses a rapid growth rate. The tree would grow taller, but lightning frequently limits height growth in the eastern U.S. The dark green, 1/2-inch-long, individual leaves on young trees are lanceolate and look somewhat like spruce or fir needles at first glance. Mature leaves are somewhat contorted on twisted branches. Both leaf types appear on the tree at the same time. The trunk is often curved and swollen at the base and black. The large, spiny, 10 to 15-pound cones are rare in cultivation.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Araucaria heterophylla

**Pronunciation:** air-ah-KAIR-ee-uh het-er-oh-FILL-uh

**Common name(s):** Norfolk-Island-Pine

**Family:** Araucariaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** suitable for growing indoors; specimen

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 60 to 80 feet

**Spread:** 12 to 20 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** columnar; pyramidal

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** fast

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Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear; needle-like (filiform)
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: green
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; 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

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerol salt 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

Although they provide some shade, they are not suitable for patios or terraces because they are too large and large surface roots are common. In addition, columnar-formed trees generally cast limited shade due to the narrow crown. Many people forget how tall these trees grow. They often have an attractive pyramidal form (like a fir or spruce tree) when they are small, but they quickly grow too tall for most residential sites. They can live as a house plant for a long time if not overwatered.

Growing best in full sun locations, this tree thrives on a variety of soils and is moderately salt tolerant. Young plants should be watered well, especially during periods of drought. Be sure to prune out multiple trunks or leaders as they should be grown with one central leader.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings of erect shoot tips only.

Pests

Scale.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern. Sooty mold, and leaf spot are minor problems.