**Casuarina spp.**  
**Australian-Pine**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

Long-favored for use in erosion control along beaches, Australian-Pine Tree is now outlawed in many parts of Florida due to its invasive nature, rapid growth rate, and non-native status (Fig. 1). It is not a true pine tree and is not related to the pines. A straight, upright tree capable of reaching 70 to 90 feet in height and possessing rough, fissured, dark gray bark, Australian-Pine has what appear to be long, soft, gray/green needles but these "needles" are actually multi-jointed branchlets, the true leaves being rather inconspicuous. These "needles" sway gently in the breeze and give off a distinctive, soft whistle when winds are particularly strong. The insignificant flowers are followed by small, spiny cones, less than one-inch-long.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** *Casuarina spp.*  
**Pronunciation:** kass-yoo-ar-EYE-nuh species  
**Common name(s):** Australian-Pine, Casuarina  
**Family:** Casuarinaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** not recommended for planting  
**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 70 to 90 feet  
**Spread:** 30 to 40 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette  
**Crown shape:** upright  
**Crown density:** open  
**Growth rate:** fast  
**Texture:** fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: scale-like
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree

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: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerance: good
Pests

No pests are of major concern.

Diseases

Root rot.

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: No entries found.
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Highly salt- and drought-tolerant, Australian-Pine was widely used in seaside landscapes as a windbreak, screen, clipped hedge, and for topiary. Its ability to withstand heat and other adverse conditions made Australian-Pine a favorite for street tree or specimen use also. It is not planted now due to the problems it has created including the elimination of habitat for native plants. Injured trees compartmentalize wounds poorly and decay advances rapidly through the trunk. Old trees which have been topped and abused often become hazardous and they can fall over or drop large limbs.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Australian-Pine will tolerate many adverse conditions, dry or wet soil, heat or high winds. Trees are hardy to about 25-degrees F. Vigorous sprouts often originate from the roots of older trees knocked back by the cold.