**Pinus clausa**  
**Sand Pine**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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**INTRODUCTION**

This native North American pine is usually seen as a scrubby tree, capable of reaching 100 feet in height but more often seen 15 to 40 feet tall, with a slow growth rate (Fig. 1). The supple, evergreen leaves and the plant’s ability to thrive in almost any soil make Sand Pine a good choice for use as a Christmas tree, with proper shearing. The 2 to 3.5-inch-long, spiny cones persist for quite a while on the tree, often becoming embedded in the wood of the twigs.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** *Pinus clausa*  
**Pronunciation:** PIE-nus KLAH-suh  
**Common name(s):** Sand Pine  
**Family:** Pinaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 7 through 10 (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** native to North America  
**Uses:** recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; shade tree; specimen; Christmas tree; no proven urban tolerance  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

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**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 25 to 40 feet  
**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette  
**Crown shape:** oval  
**Crown density:** open  
**Growth rate:** slow

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate; spiral
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen; fragrant; needle leaf evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 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 (Fig. 3)

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; 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: needs little pruning to develop a 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: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium
Wood specific gravity: 0.48

Culture

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

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: seeds itself into the landscape
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The trunks on Sand Pine are rarely straight. The tree usually grows with a portion of the crown missing or with a lean to one side. This may contribute to the unpopularity of the tree in the landscape trade. However, this attribute can make it well suited for planting as an accent in any large scale landscape. It is especially useful and attractive when planted in a lawn area as a single specimen. It certainly has its place in reclamation sites as a colonizer of poor soils. The tolerance to dry, sandy soils should make this tree adaptable to conditions created near asphalt and other hot areas in urban landscapes.

Sand Pine should be grown in full sun on any well-drained soil. The tree is highly drought- and salt-tolerant.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.