**Pseudolarix kaempferi**
Golden Larch

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This large but graceful, uncommon deciduous conifer reaches 40 to 70 feet in height with a straight trunk and a spread of 20 to 40 feet (Fig. 1). Since it grows very slowly, it is usually not seen more than 30 to 40 feet tall. The silhouette is a rather open but symmetrical pyramidal shape with pendulous branch tips. The fine-textured needled foliage is 1.5 to 2 inches long and pale green above, blue/green below. The foliage turns a brilliant yellow in the fall for a short time but long enough to make a very striking landscape statement. The three-inch-long, upright cones are interspersed along the branches, and the reddish-brown bark is rugged and furrowed.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** *Pseudolarix kaempferi*
- **Pronunciation:** soo-doe-LAIR-icks KEM-fer-eye
- **Common name(s):** Golden Larch
- **Family:** *Pinaceae*
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 7 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** Bonsai; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 40 to 70 feet
- **Spread:** 20 to 40 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

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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: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

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

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; showy trunk; 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: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
The cultivar ‘Nana’ is a dwarf form. ‘Annesleyana’ is a dense, dwarf form with weeping branches.

Propagation is by seed, although it is difficult to obtain fertile seed.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

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**Other**

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible
Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

The attractive bark, strong pyramidal shape, and wide-spreading branches make Golden Larch particularly attractive in the winter landscape. Its slow growth and attractive form makes it a popular choice for containers and for use as a bonsai. It can be used in residential landscapes since it grows at a slow rate. Plant it in the open so the form can be fully appreciated. Locate it far enough from sidewalks and buildings so lower branches will not have to be pruned.

Golden Larch should be grown in full sun on deep, rich, well-drained, moist acid soil where the trees can be protected from harsh, cold winds. The trees should not be planted in limestone soils and they are not tolerant of clay unless located on a slope where drainage would be excellent.