Pseudotsuga menziesii ‘Fastigiata’
‘Fastigiata’ Douglas-Fir

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

INTRODUCTION

This cultivar of Douglas-Fir probably grows about 40 feet tall but spreads only about 10 or 15 feet in a dense, narrow pyramid in the landscape (Fig. 1). This cultivar is denser than the species and is probably better suited for a screen planting. A row of these spaced 10 feet apart would make a striking border to block an undesirable view or to define a space on a large landscape. Douglas-Fir is most commonly used as a screen or occasionally a specimen in the landscape. Not suited for a small residential landscape, it is often a fixture in a commercial setting.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Pseudotsuga menziesii ‘Fastigiata’
Pronunciation: soo-doo-OO-guh men-ZEE-zee-eye
Common name(s): ‘Fastigiata’ Douglas-Fir
Family: Pinaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 6 (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 45 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: columnar; upright
Crown density: dense

Figure 1. Young ‘Fastigiata’ Douglas-Fir.

Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

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Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate; spiral (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see; 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 color: red
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

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: green
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin
Wood specific gravity: 0.48

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: low
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: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The tree prefers a sunny location with a moist soil and is not considered a good tree for the south. It grows but struggles in USDA hardiness zone 7. Douglas-Fir transplants best when balled and burlapped and has a moderate growth rate. It tolerates pruning and shearing but will not tolerate dry soil for extended periods. Protect from direc wind for best appearance. Some occasional watering in summer dry spells will help the tree stay vigorous, especially in the southern end of its range.

Other cultivars include: ‘Anguina’ - long, snake-like branches; ‘Brevifolia’ - short leaves; ‘Compacta’ - compact, conical growth; ‘Fretsii’ - dense bush, short broad leaves; ‘Glaucia’ - bluish foliage; ‘Nana’ - dwarf; ‘Pendula’ - long, drooping branchlets; ‘Revoluta’ - curled leaves; ‘Stairii’ - variegated leaves.

Pests

Aphids infestations on small trees may be dislodged with a strong stream of water from the garden hose.

Scale and bark beetles may infest Douglas-Fir, especially those under stress.

Diseases

Root rot can be a serious problem on clay and other wet soils.

Needles infected by leaf cast fungi in spring turn brown and fall off.

Several fungi cause canker diseases leading to branch dieback. Maintain tree health and prune out infected branches.