**Tsuga canadensis** ‘Sargentii’
Weeping Canadian Hemlock

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

Weeping Canadian Hemlock may be one of the most beautiful conifers, with its soft green needles attached to gently weeping branches reaching to the ground (Fig. 1). Specimen trees look their best with lower branches left on and touching the ground. The strong, conical form typical of the species is completely lost in this cultivar. The tree is usually trained to grow several feet tall then allowed to spread up to two times its height. In 80 years the tree may be 12 feet tall and 25 feet wide. It makes one of the most impressive accents or specimens of any tree available in this country. Unfortunately, infestations of woolly adelgid have been severe in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania (and other areas) and this may limit their use in these regions.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Tsuga canadensis ‘Sargentii’
**Pronunciation:** TSU-guh kan-uh-DEN-sis
**Common name(s):** Weeping Canadian Hemlock, Weeping Eastern Hemlock
**Family:** Pinaceae
**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 7A (Fig. 2)
**Origin:** native to North America
**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 10 to 12 feet
**Spread:** 20 to 30 feet
**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette
**Crown shape:** weeping
**Crown density:** dense
**Growth rate:** slow
**Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
**Leaf type:** simple
**Leaf margin:** entire
**Leaf shape:** linear
**Leaf venation:** parallel
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen; fragrant; needle leaf evergreen
**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches
**Leaf color:** green
**Fall color:** no fall color change
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

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Flower

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

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; 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; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown; gray
Current year twig thickness: thin
Wood specific gravity: 0.40

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: loam; sand; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: low
Soil salt tolerance: poor

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: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
USE AND MANAGEMENT

Hemlock transplants well balled-in-burlap and will grow in moderately dry or moist, acidic soil but prefers moist, well-drained sites. Root rot and bark splitting are common on sites which are constantly wet. Some die-back can be expected after transplanting if irrigation is not managed just right. Best growth is in partial shade in the mountainous valleys but specimens grow well in full sun in the middle and northern part of their range. Perfect when partially shaded from other trees where soil is cool and some sun sneaks through during portions of the day. It is not for planting in a lawn in competition with turf unless turf is eliminated beneath the canopy. Plants grown in full shade will be thin and will not produce the specimen effect so characteristic of Weeping Hemlock in full sun or partial shade. This is a picky plant but well worth the extra effort to cultivate it.

Other cultivars include: ‘Bennett’ - globose habit, branches weeping at the tips, dark green, grow in partial shade, three-foot height and spread; ‘White Gentsch’ - a rounded, flattened dwarf, the foliage is white at the tips, four feet high and wide.

Pests

Woolly adelgid, scales, weevils, bagworm, mites, sapsucker woodpecker can infest Hemlock. Woolly adelgid and scale infestations can devastate a planting.

Diseases

Needle rust, cankers, and non-parasitic bark splitting on heavy, poorly drained soil can cause some problems.