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Douglas Fir / Oregon Pine

Pseudotsuga menziesii

Family: Pinaceae

The genus *Pseudotsuga* contains about 7 species native to North America [2], and eastern Asia (China to Japan) [5]. The wood of pine can be separated microscopically into the white, red, yellow and the foxtail/pinyon pine groups. Douglas-fir is named for Henry Douglas (1798-1834), a Scottish botanist who traveled in North America. The word *Pseudotsuga* means "false hemlock", while *menziesii* is used in recognition of Archibald Menzies (1754-1842), a Scotch physician and naturalist, who discovered Douglas-fir in 1793 on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Other Common Names: abete di Douglas, abete odoroso d'America, abeto, acahuite, achahuite, alpine hemlock, black fir, blaue Douglas-tanne, blauwe Douglas, blauwe Douglas spar, blue Douglas-fir, British Columbia Douglas-fir, British Columbia pine, British Columbian pine, cahuite, Canadian Douglas-fir, coast Douglas-fir, Colorado Douglas-fir, Colorado pino real, Colorado real pino, Columbian pine, common Douglas, common Douglas-fir, cork-barked Douglas spruce, Douglasfenyo, Douglas, Douglas azul, Douglas bleu, Douglas des montagnes, Douglas du Colorado, Douglas glauca, Douglas pine, Douglas spruce, Douglas vert, Douglasfichte, Douglas-fir, Douglas-gran, Douglasia, Douglasia azzurra, Douglasia glauca, Douglasie, Douglaska, Douglaskuusi, Douglasspar, Douglastanne, Duglas, Duglazija, golden rod fir, gray Douglas, green Douglas, groene Douglas, grune Douglas-tanne, guallame, guayame, guayame Colorado, hallarin, hayarin, hayarin Colorado, inland Douglas-fir, interior Douglas-fir, Montana fir, Oregon, Oregon Douglas, Oregon Douglas-fir, Oregon fir, Oregon pine, Oregon spruce, Pacific Coast Douglas-fir, Patton's hemlock, pin de Douglas, pin de l'Oregon, pin d'Oregon, pinabete, pinho de Douglas, pino de corcho, pino de Douglas, pino de Oregon, pino Oregon, pino real, Puget Sound pine, red fir, red pine, red spruce, Rocky Mountain Douglas-fir, Santiam quality fir, sapin de Douglas, spruce, yellow Douglas-fir, yellow fir, yellow national fir.

Distribution: The range of Douglas-fir extends from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast and from Mexico to central British Columbia. The Douglas-fir production comes from the Coast States of Oregon, Washington, and California and from the Rocky Mountain States.

The Tree: Douglas-fir reaches heights of 250 feet (76.20 m), with a diameter of 6 feet (1.83 m), in coastal stands that are between 200 and 800 years old. The largest intact specimen was recorded at 330 feet (100.58 m) near Littlelock Washington.

General Wood Characteristics: The wood of Douglas-fir varies widely in weight and strength. When lumber of high strength is needed for structural uses, selection can be improved by applying the density rule. This rule uses percentage of latewood and rate of growth as they affect density. For equivalent knot sizes, the higher density generally indicates stronger wood. Sapwood of Douglas-fir is narrow in old-growth trees but may be as much as 3 inches (7.62 cm) wide in second-growth trees of commercial size. Fairly young trees of moderate to rapid growth have reddish heartwood and are called red-fir. Very narrow-ringed wood of old trees may be yellowish brown and is known on the market as yellow-fir.

Working Properties: No information at this time.

Durability: Rated as moderately resistant to decay. (187)

Preservation: No information at this time.

Uses: Douglas-fir is used mostly for building and construction purposes in the form of lumber, timbers, piles, and plywood. Considerable quantities go into railroad crossties, cooperage stock, mine timbers, poles, and fencing. Douglas-fir lumber is used in the manufacture of various products, including sash, doors, laminated beams, general millwork, railroad-car construction, boxes, pallets, and crates. Small amounts are used for flooring, furniture, ship and boat construction and tanks. Douglas-fir plywood has found ever-increasing usefulness in construction, furniture, cabinets, and many other products.

Toxicity: Can cause dermatitis, septic splinter wounds, or contact eczema.

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Technology Transfer Fact Sheet



Center for Wood Anatomy Research

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