

Southwestern White Pine



The Southwestern White pine grows in southwestern Colorado, along the eastern base of the San Juan Mountains, up to Saguache county, and in the Wet Mountains and Sangre de Cristos. It grows in spruce forests and along the banks of streams in the montane zone, up to an elevation of 9900 feet. It is similar in appearance to the limber pine, yet is often taller and more upright, growing from 50 to 80 feet (15 to 24 m) tall.

This pine was once considered a variety of the Limber pine. In exposed windy locations it can resemble the Limber pine, but it usually has a tall straight trunk without heavy branches. It also differs from Limber pine by having cones longer than typical limber pine cones: cones are 6 to 9 inches (15 to 23 cm) long (though some Limber pine cones are also said to be 6 inches long or more). The tips of the cone scales in Southwestern pine are recurved; they are not on Limber pine cones. The scientific name is *Pinus strobiformis* Engelmann.

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Identifying features of Southwestern White pine

Needles

Needles in bundles of five; 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches (6 to 9 cm) long, and slender. Needle margins at tips may have tiny teeth. Bright green.

Cones

6 to 9 inches (15 to 23 cm) long, cylindrical, with no bristles. Mature cones are pale or light brown, open, with scales broad and thick at the ends. Seeds large (to 1/2 inch, 12 mm, long), edible, dark brown, and with a very short wing or wingless. The cylindrical cone over 6 inches long helps distinguish this tree from Limber pine.

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