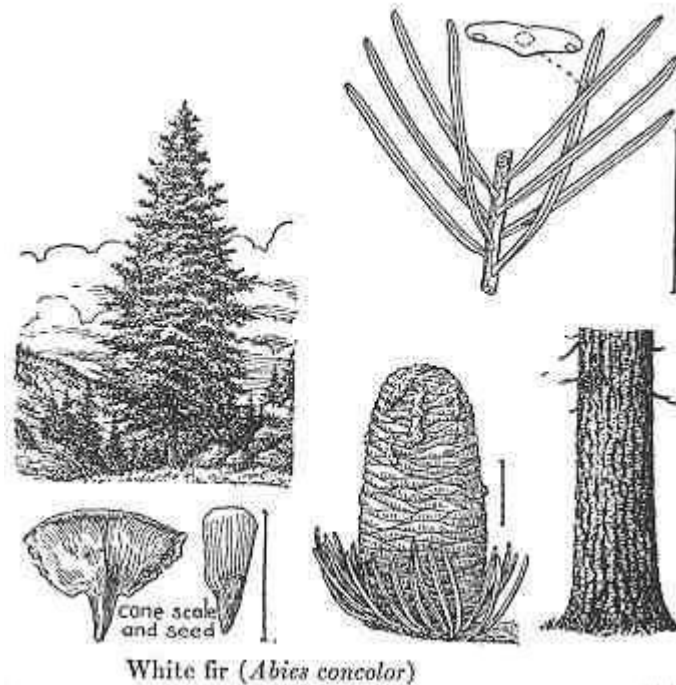


White Fir



The White Fir is found in the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico, at elevations typical of Subalpine fir or a little lower, from 7500 to 11000 feet (2300 to 3400 m). It can become a handsome tree with silver-green foliage, wider than the subalpine fir.

If you find a conifer with flat needles which are 2 to 3 inches long, it probably is a white fir.

White fir can grow on poor dry sites, but does best in moist settings. Young trees require shade and ample moisture to survive. Seldom found in pure stands, it is usually mixed with montane and subalpine trees, especially Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and Blue spruce. In open stands foliage may extend to the ground, while if crowded together the trunk may be clear for one-half or two-thirds of its height. It lives to 350 years. The maximum size is about 100 feet (30 m) tall and 3 feet (1 m) trunk diameter. In the Rockies the typical maximum trunk diameter is 15 inches (40 cm) or a little more.

The seeds are eaten by grouse, chipmunks, and pine squirrels, and young foliage is browsed by deer and mountain sheep. The wood may be used for construction lumber and plywood. The trees are used for ornamental plantings and Christmas trees.

The scientific name is "*Abies concolor* (Gordon & Glendower) Lindley ex Hildebrand;" concolor means the color is uniform.

Identifying features of White Fir

Needles

The needles are obviously longer than other Colorado firs' needles. Single, flattened, soft, 1 3/4 to 3 inches (4.4 to 7.5 cm) long on lower branches, and 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches (18 to 38 mm) on upper branches, sometimes curved and pointed or notched at the apex. Whitish on both sides with double parallel white lines on lower side. Usually one quarter to one third longer than needles on Subalpine fir. Color silver-blue, pale green or blue-green, becoming dull green. Usually spread out from the sides of twig roughly horizontally, rather than in all directions.

Cones

Mature cones, found in the upper part of the tree, are upright blunt rounded cylinders, grayish-green, yellow-green, or purple, and 3 to 5 inches (8 to 12 cm) high, which disintegrate at maturity at the end of the growing season, the scales falling from the tree and an upright spike remaining two to three years.

Bark

Smooth, thin, gray bark with horizontal resin blisters on young trees. On mature trees becomes very thick (4 to 7 inches; 10 to 18 cm) and deeply furrowed into hard wide ridges and plates, and ash gray. On some old trees it resembles the bark of old cottonwood trees.



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