

Picea pungens

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Pinophyta
Class: Pinopsida
Order: Pinales
Family: Pinaceae
Genus: *Picea*
Species: *P. pungens*

***Picea pungens* (Colorado Blue Spruce or Blue Spruce)** is a species of spruce native to western North America, from southeast Idaho and southwest Wyoming, south through Utah and Colorado to Arizona and New Mexico. It grows at high altitudes from 1,750–3,000 m altitude, though unlike Engelmann Spruce in the same area, it does not reach the alpine tree-line. It

is most commonly found growing along streamsides in mountain valleys, where moisture levels in the soil are greater than the often low rainfall in the area would suggest.



It is a medium-sized evergreen tree growing to 25–30 m tall, exceptionally to 46 m tall, and with a trunk diameter of up to 1.5 m. The bark is thin and scaly, flaking off in small circular plates 5–10 cm across. The crown is conic in young trees, becoming cylindric in older trees. The shoots are stout, orange-brown, usually glabrous, and with prominent pulvini.



The leaves are needle-like, 15–30 mm long, stout, rhombic in cross-section, dull gray-green to bright glaucous blue (very variable from tree to tree in wild populations), with several lines of stomata; the tip is viciously sharp.

The cones are pendulous, slender cylindrical, 6–11 cm long and 2 cm broad when closed, opening to 4 cm broad. They have thin, flexible scales 20–24 mm long, with a wavy margin. They are reddish to violet, maturing pale brown 5–7 months after pollination. The seeds are black, 3–4 mm long, with a slender, 10–13 mm long pale brown wing.

Popular as a specimen but hard to combine well with other plants; acceptable in dry climates; can be used in groupings; one of the standard practices in past years has been the use of this plant or a blue-foliage type in the front yard where it will immediately detract from the rest of the landscape.