

# *Abies concolor*

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Kingdom: Plantae  
Division: Pinophyta  
Class: Pinopsida  
Order: Pinales  
Family: Pinaceae  
Genus: *Abies*  
Species: *A. concolor*

**White Fir** (*Abies concolor*) is a medium to large evergreen coniferous tree growing to 25-60 m tall and with a trunk diameter of up to 2 m. It is popular as an ornamental landscaping tree and as a Christmas Tree. It is sometimes known as a Concolor Fir.

The leaves are needle-like, flattened, 2.5-6 cm long and 2 mm wide by 0.5-1 mm thick, green

to glaucous blue-green above, and with two glaucous blue-white bands of stomata below, and slightly notched to bluntly pointed at the tip. The leaf arrangement is spiral on the shoot, but with each leaf variably twisted at the base so they all lie in either two more-or-less flat ranks on either side of the shoot, or upswept across the top of the shoot but not below the shoot. The cones are 6-12 cm long and 4-4.5 cm broad, green or purple ripening pale brown, with about 100-150 scales; the scale bracts are short, and hidden in the closed cone. The winged seeds are released when the cones disintegrate at maturity about 6 months after pollination.



White fir, being shade tolerant, is a climax species in forest succession in the Sierra Nevada, and in the presence of modern human controls against forest fires, it has flourished over the past two centuries. It is sometimes regarded as a pest by those in the lumber industry, as it drives out trees of greater stature (such as the sugar pine and incense cedar), has weaker, knottier wood than its competitors, and retains its lower limbs. This latter trait creates a fire ladder that allows flames to reach up to the canopy, thinning out giant sequoia stands that would escape smaller forest fires with minimal damage.

This tree is host to fir mistletoe (*Phoradendron pauciflorum*), a parasitic plant. It is attacked by many types of insects, such as the fir engraver (*Scolytus ventralis*).

White Fir is widely planted as an ornamental tree in large parks, particularly some cultivars of subsp. *concolor* selected for very bright glaucous blue foliage, such as cv. 'Violacea'. White Fir wood is soft, knotty and not very strong nor very resistant to parasites; it is used in small amounts for paper making, packing crates and other cheap construction work.

White fir is popular as a Christmas tree and for Christmas decoration owing to its soft needles, generally excellent needle retention, and bright citrus-like scent. It is often marketed as Concolor or White fir.

It is the most adaptable of the firs for landscape work. Under hot, dry conditions, White Fir is the most prosperous fir for general use.