

Picea glauca

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

***Picea glauca* (White Spruce)** is a medium-sized evergreen tree growing to 15–30 m tall, rarely to 40 m tall, and with a trunk diameter of up to 1 m. The bark is thin and scaly, flaking off in small circular plates 5–10 cm across. The crown is narrow conic in young trees, becoming cylindric in older trees. The shoots are pale

buff-brown, glabrous (hairless) in the east of the range, but often pubescent in the west, and with prominent pulvini. The leaves are needle-like, 12–20 mm long, rhombic in cross-section, glaucous blue-green above with several thin lines of stomata, and blue-white below with two broad bands of stomata.

The cones are pendulous, slender cylindrical, 3–7 cm long and 1.5 cm broad when closed, opening to 2.5 cm broad. They have thin, flexible scales 15 mm long, with a smoothly rounded margin. They are green or reddish,



maturing pale brown 4–6 months after pollination. The seeds are black, 2–3 mm long, with a slender, 5–8 mm long pale brown wing.

The two western varieties are distinguished by pubescent (downy) shoots, and may be related to extensive hybridisation and/or intergradation with the closely related Engelmann Spruce found further south in the Rocky Mountains. White Spruce also hybridises readily with the closely related Sitka Spruce where they meet in southern Alaska; this

hybrid is known as *Picea* × *lutzii*.

A dwarf cultivar of the Alberta White Spruce, *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* 'Conica', is a popular garden plant. It has very slender leaves, like those normally found only on one-year-old White Spruce seedlings, and very slow growth, typically only 2–10 cm per year. Older specimens commonly 'revert', developing normal adult foliage and starting to grow much faster; this 'reverted' growth must be pruned if the plant is to be kept dwarf.

Useful as a specimen, in a mass planting, or as a hedge or windbreak. It is also used to a small extent as a Christmas tree.

