

# Larix kaempferi

## Japanese larch, karamatsu



*Larix kaempferi* (Japanese larch) is a deciduous conifer native to the mountainous regions of the Japanese island of Honshu. This pioneer species naturally grows in mountains between 500 and 2,900 meters altitude on moist soils. The species was introduced to Europe in 1861 by plant collector John Gould Veitch and grew into an important forestry and landscape tree. The Japanese larch typically reaches a height of twenty-five to thirty-five meters, with a crown width of eight to fifteen meters. Young trees grow very quickly, have a semi-open, regularly pyramidal crown, while older specimens develop a broader, more open, irregular crown with characteristically horizontal to slightly ascending branches.

The needles are soft, blue-green to dark green in color and are arranged in bundles of fifty on short shoots. In spring, they emerge bright green. In autumn, they turn a spectacular golden yellow, after which they fall off. The species is monoecious; in spring, before the leaves emerge, small yellowish male cones appear, as do vertical reddish-pink female flowers that later develop into decorative cones. The cones are oval to round and mature brown to grayish-brown. The bark is initially reddish-brown and smooth, but with age becomes thicker, grayish-brown, deeply furrowed, and peels off in large scales. Young twigs are strikingly reddish-brown to purplish-brown and often slightly glaucous.

*Larix kaempferi* is widely used in forestry, landscape plantings, and large parks, where it is valued for its rapid growth, beautiful autumn color, and characteristic shape. The species grows best on nutrient-rich, well-drained, and sufficiently moist soils, but tolerates poorer, acidic, and shallow soils better than the European larch. It does not tolerate lime. A position in full sun is essential, and the Japanese larch is well resistant to wind, sea wind, but sensitive to air pollution. This tree is used more in Europe than the European larch and can also be pruned very well as a hedge plant.

### SEASONAL COLOURS



### TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** standard trees, feathered trees, multi-stemmed trees, conifers, woodland planting stock | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella | **Topiary:** hedge element

### USE

**Location:** park, central reservation, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones, countryside, windbreak, coastal area | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** Landscape planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** wide pyramidal | **Crown structure:** open | **Height:** 25 - 35 m | **Width:** 8 - 15 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5A - 8B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** tolerant to wind, tolerant to coastal wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun | **pH range:** acidic, neutral

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** spadix, standing, small | **Flower colour:** yellow, pink-red | **Flowering period:** April - April | **Leaf colour:** blue-green, dark green, buds bright green | **Leaves:** deciduous, needles or scales, short needles | **Autumn colour:** golden yellow | **Fruits:** striking, cones | **Fruit colour:** brown | **Bark colour:** red-brown | **Bark:** peeling, deeply furrowed | **Twig colour:** orange-red, red-brown | **Twigs:** horizontal branches | **Root system:** deep, extensive, highly branched, central root