

Picea orientalis

Oriental spruce, Caucasian spruce



Picea orientalis (Caucasian/Oriental spruce) is a very large, evergreen conifer with a beautiful pyramidal growth habit. *Picea orientalis* was first described by German botanist Johann Heinrich Link in 1844. Caucasian spruce is found in rocky habitats in the Caucasus and North-Eastern Turkey, in mixed forests with *Fagus orientalis*, *Abies nordmanniana*, *Sorbus aucuparia* and *Rhododendron ponticum*. As a large tree it can reach a height of around 30-60 metres. In its native range, it is planted as a timber tree although it grows more slowly than *Picea abies*. It is also used to make paper or sold as a Christmas tree.

The needles of *Picea orientalis* are very short, dark green and have a fine structure. It has pendulous branches that turn upwards. The decorative drooping cones are slender, cylindrical and purple when young before changing to light brown. The seeds are small and distributed by the wind or birds. It is a single-stem tree with coarse, grey-brown bark that peels in small platelets.

Picea orientalis is a lovely tree suitable for larger gardens and parks. It grows on many different soils but best on acidic and neutral soils with good drainage. It is a slow-growing tree that grows better in cool, damp sites but can also grow in areas that are dry and with low humidity. It likes a lot of summer sun and heat. Caucasian spruce is fully hardy and can withstand cold winters and dry summers but it will develop more slowly in these sites. It is a very ornamental tree that can be used individually or as a background tree in combination with other deciduous trees and shrubs.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, feathered trees, conifers

USE

Location: park, central reservation, large garden | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** shade-tolerant, urban planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: narrow pyramidal | **Crown structure:** dense | **Height:** 20 - 30 m | **Width:** 6 - 8 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5B - 8B

ASPECTS

Wind: intolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade, shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** birds, owls, small mammals | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: discrete | **Flower colour:** red | **Flowering period:** May - May | **Leaf colour:** dark green | **Leaves:** evergreen, needles or scales, short needles | **Fruits:** discrete, cones | **Fruit colour:** brown | **Bark colour:** dark brown | **Bark:** smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour:** brown | **Twigs:** bare

