Picea smithiana

[Synonyms : *Picea kutrow*, *Picea morinda*, *Pinus kutrow*, *Pinus smithiana*]

MORINDA SPRUCE is an evergreen tree. Native to the western Himalayas (from Afghanistan and Pakistan to central Nepal) it has needle-like leaves and large hanging, glossy dark brown cones.

It is also known as *Achara* (Indian), *Bajur* (Hindi), *Épicéa de l'Himalaya* (French), *Himalaja-Fichte* (German), *Himalaja-gran* (Danish), Himalayan spruce, Indian spruce, *Morinda-Fichte* (German), *Roi* (Hindi), Western Himalayan spruce, and West Himalayan spruce.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

Smithiana can commemorate one or more people, including Christen Smith, Sir James Edward Smith, Joannes Jacobus Smith, John Smith and Karl A Harald Smith. The most likely candidate appears to be in this case an English botanist, physician, writer and lecturer, Sir James Edward Smith (1759-1828) who was a founder member of the Linnean Society of London as well as its first President in 1788 (an office he retained for life). He became a Fellow of The Royal Society following his 1784 acquisition and subsequent public display of Linnaeus' collection of plant and animal specimens (which the Linnean Society obtained after Smith's death). Some authorities also point out his great interest in Australian plants. Of his written works authorities appear to emphasise several including *English Botany*, and *A Compendium of the English Flora* (a major extension of one of his earlier works, *Flora Britannica*).

According to some authorities morinda spruce has been a source of local food. Inner bark has not only offered emergency rations but when dried and powdered has been added to bread mixtures or used as soup thickening. Raw or cooked young round male catkins have been used as food flavouring and the roasted centres of young cones have yielded a sweet syrup. Young shoots have been prepared as a refreshing tea and the roots have been used to make spruce beer.

The dull grey-brown bark has provided local material for roofing and for making water troughs.

The lightweight wood has proved suitable for a wide range of applications from housebuilding, shingling, ceilings and railway sleepers to water troughs, boxes, packing cases, matches and rough furniture. It has also been used for making paper pulp or charcoal, and it has been burnt as what some authorities describe an indifferent fuel..