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Pinus aristata

[Synonyms : *Pinus balfouriana* var. *aristata*, *Pinus longaeva*]

HICKORY PINE is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to south-western North America it has needle-like leaves and egg-shaped bristly, violet-brown cones.

It is also known as *Borovice osinatá* (Czech), Bristlecone pine, Foxglove pine, Foxtail pine, *Grannen-Kiefer* (German), Intermountain bristlecone pine, and Rocky mountain bristlecone pine.

Aristata means ‘bearded, or with a stiff bristle-like awn with a long tapering tip’ with reference usually to the leaf tip.

Authorities note that hickory pine is often confused with a close relative *Pinus longaeva* which has been shown to live for at least 5000 years. In contrast hickory pine appears to be a youngster as botanists have calculated that it only survives for about 2000 years. [Thus a tree named ‘Methuselah’ in the Inyo National Forest in the California White Mountains which was claimed in the 1950s to be the oldest living tree – and in the year 2000 was believed to have reached 4,786 years – provides the subject for debate by some authorities as to whether it is in actual fact a hickory pine.]

North American Shoshoni Indians used a pitch poultice to treat boils and sores.

In examinations of living trees, dead trees and tree remains the wood structure of hickory pine has revealed information about past climatic changes, and local phenomena such as earthquakes eg. the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

Locally the lightweight and soft, light red wood has been used to make pit props, and burnt as fuel.

It is understood that hickory pine has only been cultivated in Europe since 1972.