

*Pinus cembra*

[Synonyms : *Cembra montana*, *Pinea cembra*, *Pinus cembra* subsp.*sibirica*, *Pinus montana*, *Pinus sibirica*]

**SIBERIAN CEDAR** is an evergreen tree. Native to Europe (especially central Europe) and to Asia it has needle-like leaves and small oblong, glossy dark reddish-brown cones.

It is also known as Arolla pine, *Arolle* (French), *Arve* (German), *Borovica limba* (Slovak), *Borovice limba* (Czech), *Brödtall* (Swedish), *Cembra* (Italian), *Cembrafyrr* (Danish), *Cembratall* (Swedish), *Cembro* (Esperanto), *Limba horská* (Czech), *Limba urostlá* (Czech), *Pin cembro* (French), *Pino cembro* (Italian), Russian stone pine, *Sembra* (Finnish), *Sembramänty* (Finnish), Siberian pine, *Siperiansembra* (Finnish), *Sosna limba* (Polish), Stone pine, Swiss pine, Swiss stone pine, *Zirbe* (German), and *Zirbelkiefer* (German).

The flowers are pollinated by wind.

Warning – continued contact with the fresh wood may cause dermatitis and allergic breathing problems.

The leaves yield a turpentine known as Carpathian or Hungarian turpentine.

*Cembra* is an Italian name for this species.

Apparently the small edible seeds have long been popular in Siberia where they have been eaten in quantities – and even exported through the port of Archangel (which may explain why in some Norwegian ports they are referred to as ‘Russian nuts’). In some parts of Russia and Norway especially, as well as Switzerland, the seeds are eaten locally in dairy products or in/on pastries.

Mice and squirrels are sufficiently fond of the seeds that they will eat them out of the prickly cones.

The needles yield a brown or green dye.

It is believed to have been introduced to Britain in 1746 by the then Duke of Argyll.

Siberian cedar is a popular ornamental gracing parks and gardens in northern Europe.

These trees have provided timber for turning, building (not least Alpine huts and houses), and furniture. The lightweight wood has also been made into milk containers and toys.

Authorities point out that this wood is easy to work thus accounting for its popularity with sculptors for carving statues.

Medicinally, according to some authorities, local herbalists have used the resin in internal treatments for bladder and kidney disorders, respiratory problems including coughs, colds and influenza, and rheumatism. Externally it has been an ingredient in poultices, herbal steam baths, and inhalers and it has been applied to burns, wounds, sores, boils and other skin ailments.