

Pinus elliottii

[Synonyms : *Pinus caribaea*, *Pinus densa*, *Pinus heterophylla*, *Pinus taeda* var. *heterophylla*]
SLASH PINE is an evergreen tree. Native to south-eastern United States it has needle-like leaves and glossy reddish-brown cones.

It is also known as American pitch pine, Bastard pine, *Borovice elliotova* (Czech), British Honduras pitch pine, Cuba pine, Dade County pine, Dade County slash pine, Florida pine, Florida southern pine, Gulf Coast pitch pine, Longleaf, Longleaf pine, Longleaf pitch pine, Longleaf yellow pine, Meadow pine, Nicaraguan pine, Pitch pine, Saltwater pine, She pine, Southern Florida pine, Southern Florida slash pine, Southern pine, Southern yellow pine, South Florida slash pine, Spruce pine, Swamp pine, Yellow pine, and Yellow slash pine.

Warning – prolonged contact with the fresh wood can cause dermatitis and allergic breathing problems.

In South Africa slash pine has been declared an invading alien plant and its cultivation there is only allowed for commercial purposes in specified areas or reserves.

Elliottii commemorates an American naturalist, Stephen Elliott (1771-1830), who from 1824 was professor of natural history and botany at the Medical College of South Carolina (currently the Medical University of South Carolina due in part or whole to become part of the University of South Carolina in 2009) that he had helped to found. From the mid-1790s to 1812 Elliott ran his family estate and served on the South Carolina State legislature. When in 1812 he became President of the State bank he had established, he left the legislature and moved to Charleston. He was made President of the Charleston Library Society, and was involved in founding the Literary and Philosophical Society of South Carolina (for which he was President from 1814-1830) and also in Charleston the *Southern Review* (which has not survived to the present day). In 1819 he became a vice-president of the American Geological Society (a body which appears to have foundered in about 1828). He was also appointed President of South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina) in 1820. He maintained correspondence with his peers, built an extensive natural history collection, and published *Sketch of the Botany of South Carolina and Georgia* in addition to writing other manuscripts.

From records the tree seems to have been especially popular with the North American Seminole Indian tribe. It provided them with material for building their homes, for making furniture, baskets and torches, and also for tanning.

As a source of medicine slash pine was used by Seminole Indians for treating pain, piles, sores and cuts.

Authorities note that some deer will seek cover and like cattle occasionally browse the foliage. Birds and small mammals, such as wild turkey and some types of quail and squirrel eat the tiny, dark brown seeds while taking advantage of the trees' protection – and in the larger trees bald eagles have been known to make their nests.

The tree was/is tapped (less often today) for its crude gum providing various chemicals and drugs as well as turpentine, rosin, pitch and tar used for a wide range of applications and products.

It has been cultivated extensively in plantations and as a street tree and ornamental plant. It has also been chosen for rehabilitation programmes by environmentalists to stabilise strip-mined areas.

The heavy reddish-brown wood has been used for construction (including docks, piling and bridges) as well as for the manufacture of plywood and pulp. It has been used for poles and scaffolding, mine props and railway sleepers too.

Medicinally, local herbalists have used turpentine distilled from the gum to treat bowel problems, venereal diseases, rheumatism, catarh and colds, while the tar has been used in treatments for some skin diseases.