

Pinus jeffreyi

[Synonyms : *Pinus deflexa*, *Pinus jeffreyi* var. *baja-californica*, *Pinus jeffreyi* var. *deflexa*, *Pinus ponderosa* var. *jeffreyi*]

JEFFREY PINE is an evergreen tree. Native to the south-western United States it has needle-like leaves and pale brown cones.

It is also known as Blackbark pine, Black pine, Blackwood pine, *Borovica jeffreyho* (Slovak), *Borovice jeffreyova* (Czech), Bull pine, Gasoline tree, *Jeffrey-Kiefer* (German), Jeffrey's pine, Peninsula black pine, Peninsula pine, Ponderosa pine, Redbark pine, Redbark sierra pine, Sapwood pine, Truckee pine, Western black pine, and Western yellow pine.

The crushed leaves are said to emit an aromatic scent. The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

This tree's relatively heavy seeds are not as readily dispersed by the wind as are so many of its relatives. Some authorities note that local people have long realised the culprit primarily responsible for the long distances they become scattered – it is a particular species of North American squirrel known to many as the yellow pine chipmunk (*Tamias amoenus*) which hoards the seeds.

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

The tree is a protected species in Nevada in the United States.

Jeffreyi commemorates a Scottish explorer and plant collector, John Jeffrey (1826-1854), who was appointed to find new species by the Oregon Botanical Association of Edinburgh (botanists and horticulturists seeking new species from north-western North America in addition to those already discovered). Jeffrey was a gardener at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh where the Association was formed. He left London in May 1850 to arrive in Hudson's Bay in the August (the Hudson's Bay Company provided him with support). He crossed Canada on foot (over 1200 miles) and reached Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in May 1852. From then explored Washington State, Oregon and California until 1854. He disappeared after leaving San Francisco on another collecting trip and his diary (a requirement made by the Association) vanished with him. With the loss of that diary, his activities had to be pieced together from a very small amount of correspondence, accounts of those who met him and the specimens received in Scotland (that were accompanied by notes of when and where collected). Although some critics at the time believed his efforts were inadequate botanists now point out that both his discoveries of new species and re-introductions of conifers in particular have proved to be important. He discovered Jeffrey pine in 1852.

The explanation for the common name Gasoline tree is (with the distance of time) amusing.

Some authorities have noted that jeffrey pine was responsible for some unexpected explosions during the American Civil War (1861-1865). Unfortunately for the Union turpine manufacturers pitch from jeffrey pine contains a highly explosive element and, as this tree can be fairly easily confused with ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) which they obviously thought they were targeting, when mistaken identity occurred the results must have been hairy . Authorities point out that the primary difference between the two trees are the longer, less prickly cones found on the jeffrey pine.

Some of the North American Paiute Indians ate the sap like confectionery both when they harvested it and in the Winter from their stored reserves. They found there was actually a demand for it so they were able to exploit this and harvest it as a cash crop.

The needles were used for basketry by the Diegueño Indians – who also used the bark for making temporary shelters especially when they were up in the mountains collecting acorns.

The oily darkly mottled, greyish-brown seeds can be eaten raw or cooked.

The yellowish to light reddish brown or orange heartwood has been used for building interiors and to a lesser extent for veneering and making mine supports, railway sleepers, posts, boxes and crates. Today authorities note that much of this wood is pulped for the manufacture of paper and board.

The tree has been cultivated occasionally as an ornamental plant and has attracted the attentions of bonsai enthusiasts.

Medicinally, local herbalists took advantage of the qualities common to most species in this genus.