

Pinus monticola

[Synonyms : *Pinus monticola* var. *minima*, *Pinus strobus* var. *monticola*, *Strobus monticola*]

WESTERN WHITE PINE is an evergreen tree. Native to north-western North America it has needle-like leaves and many large hanging, brown cones.

It is also known as *Borovice pohorská* (Czech), Californian mountain pine, Finger-cone pine, Idaho sugar pine, Idaho white pine, *Lännenvalkomänty* (Finnish), Little sugar pine, Mountain pine, Mountain Weymouth pine, Mountain white pine, Norway white pine, Silver pine, Soft pine, *Westliche Weymouths-Kiefer* (German), Weymouth mountain pine, White pine, and Yellow pine.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind. The cream to light reddish brown heartwood darkens upon exposure to air.

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

Western white pine is a protected tree in Nevada in the United States.

Monticola is Latin (mountain dweller, highlander) meaning ‘of or from mountains’.

Several North American Indian tribes harvested food from this tree. Authorities note that the Shuswap used the cones, and the Paiute Indians ate the nuts. Gum from trunk and branches was chewed by the Thompson tribe and some of the Salish ate the inner bark both fresh and dried into cakes.

Small ceremonial totem poles and model canoes were made from the wood by the Nitinaht tribe, while the Paiute Indians threw green branches into the fire during their ritual praying for rain.

Both the Nitinaht and some of the Salish Indians used the pitch. The former applied its waterproofing qualities by coating fishing and whaling gear with it, and the latter used its adhesive properties to stick arrowheads to shafts.

On occasion the bark was used by the Skagit and Okanagan-Colville tribes for making canoes or dugouts.

Various parts of the tree had medicinal uses for several North American Indian tribes. The Quinault tribe took it for blood ailments and the Kwakiutl used it for some female problems. It offered a cough remedy for the Quileute, Hoh and Kwakiutl Indians, and was taken by the Quinault and Kwakiutl tribes for stomach upsets. Lummi, Shuswap and Skagit Indians all turned to it for treating tuberculosis, and the Skagit and Mahuna tribes used it as a remedy for easing rheumatism. Skagit Indians applied it to cuts, and they and the Kwakiutl and Nitinaht tribes also used it for various skin disorders.

This was one of the trees first discovered by the Scottish botanist David Douglas (1798-1834) who collected plants in North America for the Horticultural Society of London and introduced its seeds to Britain.

The lightweight and durable wood has been used for building construction and for manufacturing plywood and paper-pulp – and the foundry industry has used it for making patterns. In addition the wood has been chosen for veneering, carving, decking and flooring, as well as for making building interiors, furniture, matches, toothpicks, boxes and crates.

For wildlife elk and deer generally occasionally browse on the foliage – but a species of grouse appears to have a particular partiality for it. The tiny seeds are an important food for some kinds of mice and squirrels.
The state of Idaho in the United States adopted western white pine as a state emblem in 1935..