

*Pinus radiata*

[Synonyms : *Pinus insignis*, *Pinus montereyensis*, *Pinus radiata* var. *binata*, *Pinus tuberculata*]

**MONTEREY PINE** is an evergreen tree. Native to south-western North America it has needle-like glossy leaves and egg-shaped glossy yellow-brown cones.

It is also known as *Borovice montereyská* (Czech), Insignis pine, Insular pine, Insular two-leaved pine, *Monterey-Kiefer* (German), Monterey small-coned pine, Nearly smooth-cone pine, *Pin de Monterey* (French), *Pino de Monterey* (Canary Island), Radiata pine, Remarkable cone pine, Remarkable pine, Small-coned Monterey pine, Smooth-cone pine, and Spreading-cone pine.

Warning – prolonged contact with the fresh wood can cause dermatitis.

In California it is considered to be threatened in its now limited native habitat. In South Africa Monterey pine has been declared an invading alien plant and its cultivation there is only allowed for commercial purposes in specified areas or reserves.

*Radiata* is Latin (provided with rays or spokes) meaning ‘with rays or radiating’ with reference to the cones’ scales.

David Douglas (1798-1834), the celebrated Scottish botanist who travelled widely in North America, included seeds of the Monterey pine with others he sent back to his British sponsors, the Horticultural Society of London. Fifty years later the Monterey pine was being introduced to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). In 1850 it had been introduced to New Zealand where it was cultivated for windbreaks and pine plantations (and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the latter are now extensive).

The lightweight pinkish tinged, white wood has been used as fuel. In New Zealand in the 1970s a dairy Company planted its own pinewood of these trees. Their wood is now being sold on a continuous basis to a local sawmill as it is husbanded and harvested. At the same time the dairy company receives a ready and continuous supply of steam heat from the sawmill’s boiler (also supplied by the dairy Company) that is fed with the waste bark, chips and sawdust. Apart from this enterprising, environmentally-friendly example the wood has also been used in several countries for veneering, and for manufacturing plywood and pulp (the latter for paper). It has also been used for making crates and boxes. Authorities note that today, apart from some of the foregoing, it is used particularly for flooring, weatherboarding and cabinetwork, as well as for making brooms, toys, tool handles and matches.

The tree is grown widely as an ornamental plant. Apart from South Africa (already referred to) it has also been introduced in particular to Kenya, in Europe to Spain, to Australia, and in South America to Brazil and Chile – and of course other parts of North America outside its native habitat. In the latter it is also grown for the Christmas tree market.