

Pinus sylvestris

[Synonyms : *Pinus borealis*, *Pinus fominii*, *Pinus krylovii*, *Pinus montana*, *Pinus mughus*, *Pinus resinosa*, *Pinus rubra*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *communis*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *genuina*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *nana*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *nevadensis*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *norvegica*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *rigensis*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *scotica*, *Pinus sylvestris* var. *sibirica*, *Pinus tartarica*]

SCOTS PINE is an evergreen tree. Native to Asia, central Europe and to Scotland it has with needle-like leaves and egg-shaped dull grey-brown cones.

It is also known as *Borovica lesná* (Slovak), *Borovica sosna* (Slovak), *Borovice lesní* (Czech), *Fir*, *Föhre* (German), *Fur* (Swedish), *Fura* (Swedish), *Furu* (Norwegian), *Gemeine Kiefer* (German), *Grove den* (Dutch), *Mänty* (Finnish), Norway pine, *Obični bor* (Croatian), *Paprastoji pušis* (Lithuanian), *Pine*, *Pin de pădure* (Rumanian), *Pin de Riga* (French), *Pino arbara* (Esperanto), *Pino silvestre* (Italian), *Pin roșu* (Rumanian), *Pin sylvestre* (French), *Pinwydden Sgotland* (Welsh), Railroad cross ties, Railway sleepers, *Rdeči bor* (Slovenian), Red deal, *Sarıçam* (Turkish), Scotch fir, Scotch pine, Scots fir, *Skógarfura* (Icelandic), *Skogstall* (Swedish), *Skov-Fyr* (Danish), *Sosna* (Czech), *Sosna zwyczajna* (Polish), *Tall* (Swedish), *Waldföhre* (German), *Wald-Kiefer* (German), and Yellow deal; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of boldness, elevation, endurance, fecundity (cone), fidelity, ‘fidelity and passionate love’ (twin pines), fire (cone), good luck (cone), health, immortality, ‘the phallic principle’ (cone), philosophy (pitch), and time (pitch).

The shoots are collected in mid- to late Spring before they open and dried in shade. The roots are distilled to give vegetable tar. An essential oil is obtained by dry distillation of the wood.

Scots pine can be extremely invasive when introduced outside its native habitat.

Sylvestris means ‘wild, of or from woods or forests’.

The Scots pine used to be common all over northern Europe (including Britain). It is believed that it was often planted as a landmark because of its distinctive appearance and some say that in the English Cotswolds it was a sign of haven for Jacobite sympathisers (supporters of ‘James of the Fiery Face’ as the Scottish king, James II (1430-1460) came to be known). But in Britain today it can only be found in the wild in the highlands of Scotland.

Its In Europe it was believed that its pine cones were believed to be could provide a protection from witchcraft.

The Scots pine used to be an important source of turpentine but it has been superseded by that obtained from other pines. It also provided ‘wood-wool’ which was used for as a packing material and stuffing for cushions.

Scots pine is used as an emblem by many of the Scottish clans including the MacGregor.

Today the wood of trees from central Europe which is harder is used for carpentry and construction, as well as for masts, and the decking of cruisers. Chipped wood residues are made into chipboard. Vegetable tar provides an ingredient for the toiletry industry for hair restoratives. Oil is used by the pharmaceutical industry in cold and cough remedies

and in preparations for skin ailments, muscle stiffness and rheumatism, and it also offers a flavouring and/or fragrance for the detergent, disinfectant and toiletry industries. Medicinally, herbalists used to recommend the bark and resin for the treatment of gout, open wounds and urinary disorders. It is still used today in pharmaceutical remedies, particularly in cough mixtures and ointments for some skin ailments. It is the birthday flower for 21st March. Pine pitch is the birthday 'flower' for 26th March.