

Abies balsamea var. *phanerolepis*

Common Name(s): Canaan Fir; West Virginia Balsam Fir

Previously known as: *Abies balsamea* subsp. *phanerolepis*; *Abies intermedia*

Description

Canaan fir is a needled evergreen tree in the Pinaceae (pine) family found in the high-elevation mountains of West Virginia, Virginia, and the northern most eastern states into Canada. The common name Cannan comes from the Canaan Valley which is located northeast of Elkins, WV. It is similar to Fraser and balsam firs within both appearance and growth rate.

Plant in full sun to partial shade. Canaan fir tolerates wet soils better than other firs though it prefers moist, well-drained sandy loam acidic soils. It grows to a mature height of 55 feet and width of 25 feet so be sure to have enough room for this needled evergreen. While Canaan fir does not tolerate urban pollution well its buds break later than Fraser or balsam fir so it is less susceptible to frost damage.

This handsome formal densely branched conical tree with short dark blue green needles makes an ideal accent plant, small grouping, for screening or it can be used as a Christmas tree. Use it in a rain garden, near a lawn, or in a naturalized area, meadow, or woodland area.

Insects, Diseases, and Other Plant Problems: See potential pests of conifers fact sheet to the left.

[More information on *Abies balsamea*.](#)



Form



Leaves



cones

Attributes:

Genus:

Abies

Species:

balsamea

Family:

Pinaceae

Life Cycle:

Woody

Recommended Propagation Strategy:

Seed

Country Or Region Of Origin:

Appalachian Mountains

Distribution:

ME , NH , VA , VT , WV

Dimensions:

Height: 40 ft. 0 in. - 55 ft. 0 in.

Width: 20 ft. 0 in. - 25 ft. 0 in.

Whole Plant Traits:

Plant Type:

Tree

Woody Plant Leaf Characteristics:

Needled Evergreen

Habit/Form:

Columnar

Dense

Pyramidal

Growth Rate:

Medium

Maintenance:

Low

Texture:

Medium

Landscape:

Landscape Location:

Lawn

Meadow

Naturalized Area

Woodland

Landscape Theme:

Rain Garden

Design Feature:

Accent

Screen/Privacy

Small groups

Attracts:

Songbirds

Cultural Conditions:

Light:

Full sun (6 or more hours of direct sunlight a day)

Partial Shade (Direct sunlight only part of the day, 2-6 hours)

Soil Texture:

Loam (Silt)

Sand

Soil pH:

Acid (<6.0)

Soil Drainage:

Good Drainage

Moist

Occasionally Wet

Available Space To Plant:

12-24 feet

24-60 feet

NC Region:

Mountains

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone:

3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b

Fruit:

Fruit Color:

Brown/Copper

Gray/Silver

Purple/Lavender

Fruit Value To Gardener:

Showy

Display/Harvest Time:

Fall

Fruit Description:

Violet cones turn gray-brown when mature

Flowers:

Flower Description:

no flowers

Leaves:

Woody Plant Leaf Characteristics:

Needled Evergreen

Leaf Color:

Blue

Gray/Silver

Green

Leaf Feel:

Soft

Leaf Value To Gardener:

Fragrant

Showy

Leaf Type:

Needles

Leaf Shape:

Linear

Hairs Present:

No

Leaf Length:

1-3 inches

Leaf Width:

< 1 inch

Leaf Description:

Needles are 0.8 to 1 inch long, flat, soft, dark green above and have silvery blue-white, longitudinal bands or stripes on the underside. The needles are highly fragrant.

Bark:

Bark Color:

Dark Gray

Bark Description:

Smooth gray bark

Stem:

Stem Is Aromatic:

No