

Plant Profiles: HORT 2242 Landscape Plants II

Botanical Name: *Pinus aristata*

Common Name: bristlecone pine

Family Name: Pinaceae – pine family

General Description: Native to the Rocky Mountains of southern Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona, *Pinus aristata* frequently grows in high elevations on dry, rocky exposed slopes. It is a slow growing long-lived species with some trees estimated to be thousands of years old. In the garden, bristlecone pine makes an excellent specimen plant in a sunny, well-drained site.

Zone: 4-7

Resources Consulted:

Dirr, Michael A. *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses*. Champaign: Stipes, 2009. Print.

Fryer, Janet L. "Pinus aristata." In: *Fire Effects Information System*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (Producer), 2004. Web. 26 Jan. 2014.

"The PLANTS Database." *USDA, NRCS*. National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA, 2014. Web. 17 Mar. 2014.

Creator: Julia Fitzpatrick-Cooper, Professor, College of DuPage

Creation Date: 2014

Keywords/Tags: Pinaceae, tree, conifer, cone, needle, evergreen, *Pinus aristata*, bristlecone pine



Whole plant/Habit:

- **Description:** *Pinus aristata* is a dwarf, dense shrub to small tree. It is often irregular in habit defying one term that fits all!
- **Image Source:** Richard Webb, Self-employed horticulturist, Bugwood.org
- **Image Date:** Unknown
- **Image File Name:** 1480725-SMPT.jpg

**Whole plant/Habit:**

- Description: This specimen of *Pinus aristata* growing at The Morton Arboretum shows the tree form habit it can achieve with age. However, this specimen is growing in too much shade and is showing signs of stress.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 23, 2008
- Image File Name: bristlecone_pine_1040751.png

**Bark:**

- Description: Bark is not a distinctive feature on bristlecone pine.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 7, 2008
- Image File Name: bristlecone_pine_1040464.png

**Branch/Twig:**

- Description: The bushy "foxtail" branches are a great identification feature. The needles on bristlecone pine are retained for up to 15 or more years creating a thick, full branch.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 23, 2008
- Image File Name: bristlecone_pine_1040750.png



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Bud:

- Description: Buds are not a distinctive identification feature. The bud in this picture is larger than usual. It may be swelling prior to growth. Notice, however, the bristles on the cone scales.
- Image Source: USDA Forest Service-Region 2-Rocky Mountain Region Archive, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org
- Image Date: Unknown
- Image File Name: 1442154-SMPT.jpg



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Flower:

- Description: Though not true flowers the reproductive structures on pines are often referred to as such. Pines are monoecious; producing male pollen cones (on left) and separate female seed cones (on right) all on the same plant. Male pollen cones are clustered at the base of new growth. Female cones form near the tip of new growth. The color phases can vary according to species. Note: This photo is meant to show general images for “flowers”. The images are not from the same pine species and may not be of the same species referenced in this Plant Profile.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: Early June
- Image File Name: pinus_flower-00.png



5389946

Cone:

- Description: The 2-4 inch cone has a bristle-like prickle on the end of each scale; hence, the name bristlecone pine.
- Image Source: Tom DeGomez, University of Arizona, Bugwood.org.
- Image Date: Unknown
- Image File Name: 5389946-PPT.jpg



Leaf Number/Attachment:

- Description: *Pinus aristata* is a 5-needle pine. The thick bluish green needles clump together in such a way it is not immediately apparent how many needles are in each bundle. The needles are dotted with white resin. This is natural; there is nothing wrong with the plant. The white resin flecks are a great identification feature!
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 23, 2008
- Image File Name: bristlecone_pine_4103.png



Winter interest:

- Description: The thick, full branches and irregular habit makes bristlecone pine especially attractive in winter.
- Image Source: Iowa State University Extension <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/news/2005/jan/jan0522.htm>
- Image Date: Unknown
- Image File Name: PinusAristata1.jpg



Special ID feature(s):

- Description: The white resin flecks on this 5-needle pine are a quick, easy identification feature.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: April 12, 2009
- Image File Name: bristlecone_pine_1120824.png