PLANT FACT SHEET

Abies lasiocarpa (Hook.) Nutt.

GENUS *Abies* **FAMILY** Pinaceae

COMMON NAMES Rocky mountain fir, Subalpine fir

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Gum, bark, Leaves - drink

The young shoots are used for tea by steeping them in boiling water.
The cones are ground and used for sweets,
The gum is chewed like chewing gum.
The inner bark and cambium is eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A tree to 25 m tall but can be a shrub at high altitudes. The trunk can be 75 cm across. The crown is narrow and pointed. The branches are small and drooping. The needles are flat, crowded and overlapping. There are bluish stripes on both surfaces. They are 25-40 mm long but they vary even on the same twig. The tip is rounded. They are greyish green or bluish green. There are lines of white dots. The cones are flat and dark purple. They are barrel shaped and 4-10 cm long. The scales are wide and the bracts are shorter than the scales. The cones break up leaving the bare axis. The seeds are 6 mm long. They are purple brown. They are firmly attached to the seed coat.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows on mountain sides and is rarely seen below 600 m. It grows up to 2000 m altitude in Canada. It can tolerate shade. It suits moist but not waterlogged soil. It can tolerate cold and frost. It grows up to the tree line in the Rocky mountains. It suits hardiness zones 4-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They germinate in about 6 weeks. Seedlings should be transplanted while still very small. Trees can be produced by layering. Trees can form natural layers on lower branches.

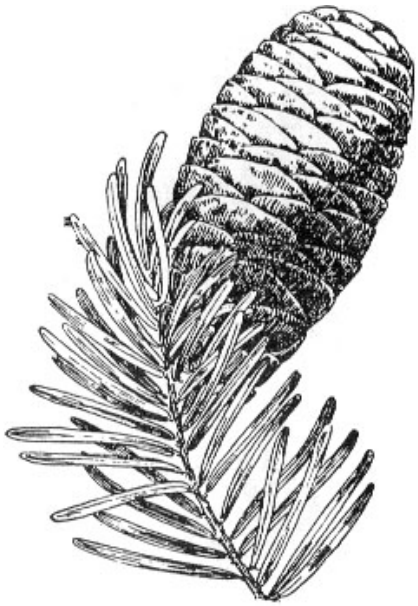
Harvesting and Seed Production

Trees can live to 200 years old. Seeds are abundant. Good seed years occur about every 3 years,

NOTES

There are about 50 Abies species. They are mostly in north temperate regions.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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