

White Fir (*Abies concolor*)

Nebraska Forest Service



White fir (*Abies concolor*) is a tree that has been planted in Nebraska for some time. It is becoming more popular as an alternative to some of the pines that are beginning to show long term problems. White fir is also called concolor fir using its Latin name. The Latin name, *Abies concolor*, means tall or rising tree with needles of one color.

The White Fir grows to be a large tree and can reach heights of over 90 feet in its native range. In Nebraska it will reach heights of over 50 feet.

As a landscape tree white fir is highly prized because of its blue-green color. It is also very aromatic. The needles are about 2 inches long and flattened like all firs. They have a very nice silvery-blue color and the undersides have two white lines going lengthwise. The needles have a slight curve and are soft to the touch. The cones are born upright and usually at the tops of the trees. Cones are not usually produced until the tree is over ten years old. When the cones are young they are a purple color and change to olive green as they mature.

White fir is native from Colorado to California and Oregon to New Mexico. It is found mostly in higher elevations. The tree is relatively drought tolerant but does best on moist well drained soils. It does not tolerate poorly drained soil or heavy clay. The tree is an important forest tree and is harvested for its lumber. It is also very popular as a Christmas tree since it will hold its needles better than most other evergreens.

White fir can be used as a wind break on sites that are not so severe. It can sometimes have problems with winter burn. The tree does not like to be planted alone on exposed sites and can be subject to wind throw. It is best to plant white fir in groups. There's safety in numbers. It is also an excellent tree for bird habitat.



White fir will provide excellent year 'round beauty and enjoyment in your home landscape or in the field. And what a great tree to light up at Christmas!