

Blue Spruce

Picea pungens

Sound it out: PIE-see-ya PUN-jenz



Blue spruce typically grow 30-60 feet high in the urban landscape but can grow up to 100 feet in the wild. They have a stiff, pyramidal form with branches horizontally spreading in dense whorls. The typical bluish green to silvery green color of the needles is quite distinctive, and blue spruce are widely used in the landscape as focal points or specimen trees.



Scan this QR code to view a map of the Arboretum's blue spruces and learn about one of our oldest specimens.

Juvenile needles emerge as a soft clump, but develop points with sharp tips as they mature. The prickly needles can be up to 1 ¼ inches in length and are 4-sided. The scientific name *pungens* comes from the Latin “to stick or prick.” Blue spruce are native to the Rocky Mountains and are the state tree of Colorado. They are monoecious, bearing both male and female cones on the same tree. Most trees do not begin to bear cones until they are at least 20 years old.

In the Arnold Arboretum you can see many blue spruce along the west side of the Bussey Brook and along Hemlock Hill Road, not far from the Bussey Street Gate. In the Leventritt Shrub and Vine Garden, look for two cultivars of blue spruce, *Picea pungens* ‘Hunnewelliana’ and *P. pungens* ‘Compacta’. Both can both be found along the path up to the Larz Anderson Bonsai House at the top of the Shrub and Vine Garden. These specimens were accessioned into the collections in 1978 and 1985 respectively.

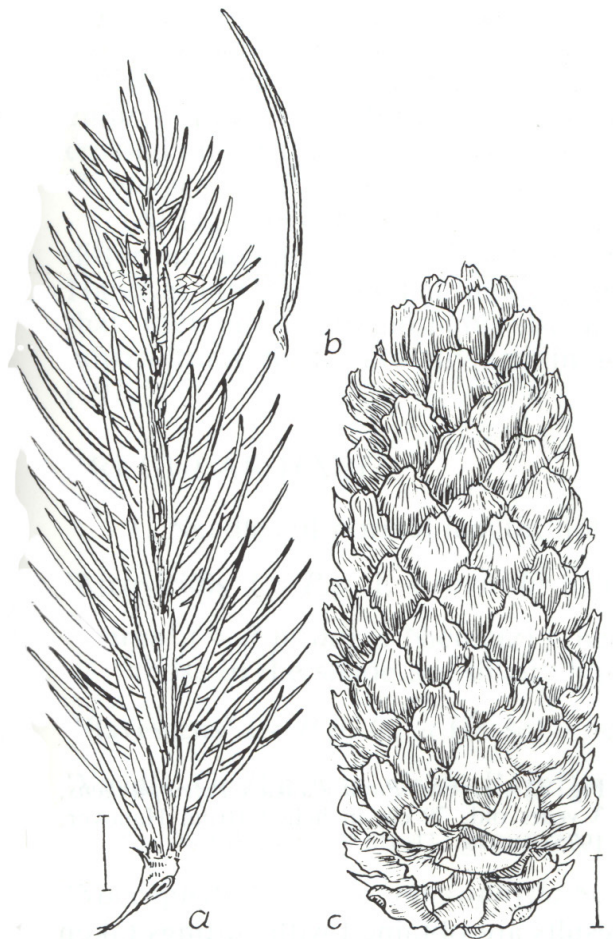


Fig. 215. *Picea pungens*: a. shoot with needles, b. needle (enlarged), c. cone.

Figure from: “Conifers: Morphology and Variation” by Mirko Vidakovic