

Pinus clausa: Sand Pine¹

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Introduction

This native North American pine is usually seen as a scrubby tree, capable of reaching 100 feet in height but more often seen 15 to 40 feet tall, with a slow growth rate. The supple, evergreen leaves and the plant's ability to thrive in almost any soil make Sand Pine a good choice for use as a Christmas tree, with proper shearing. The 2 to 3.5-inch-long, spiny cones persist for quite a while on the tree, often becoming embedded in the wood of the twigs.

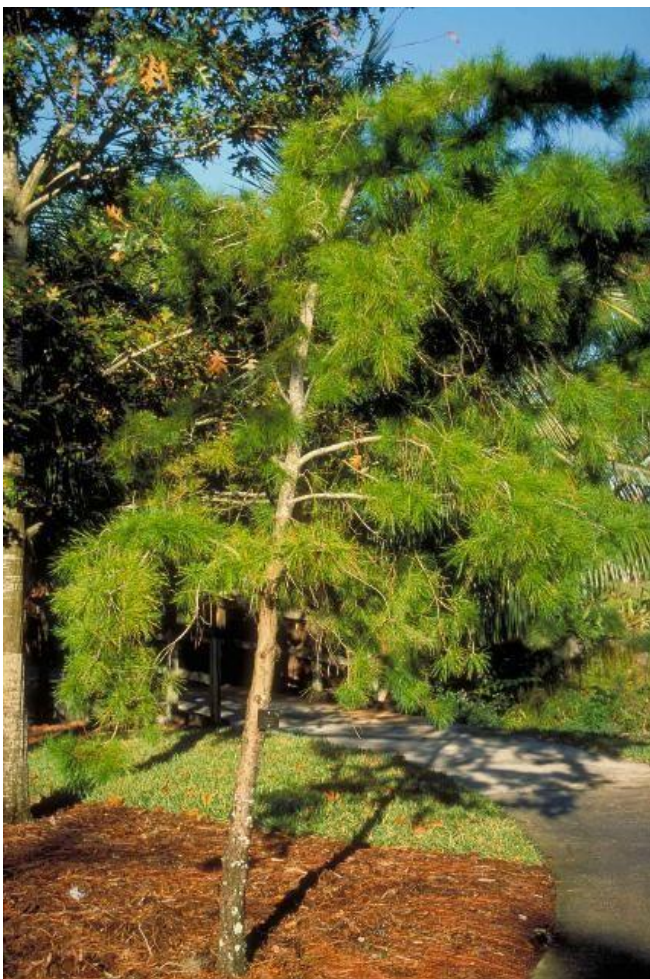


Figure 1 . Mature *Pinus clausa*: Sand Pine
Credit: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Pinus clausa*

Pronunciation: PIE-nus KLAU-suh

Common name(s): Sand Pine

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7A through 10B (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: weedy native

Uses: specimen; shade; reclamation; highway median; Christmas tree

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

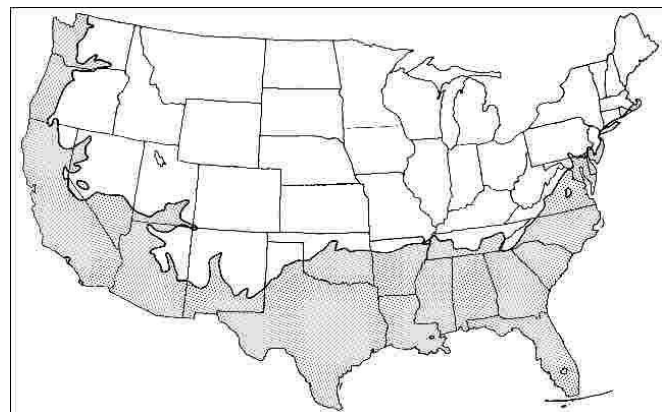


Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 25 to 40 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: oval

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: fragrant, evergreen, needled evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, cone

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels/mammals; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: susceptible to breakage

Current year twig color: brown

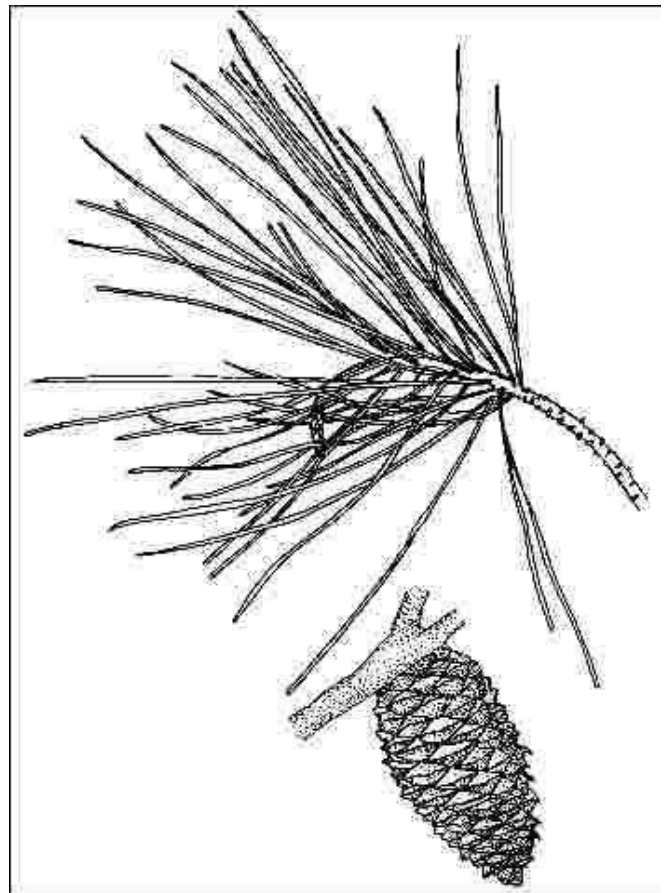


Figure 3. Flower

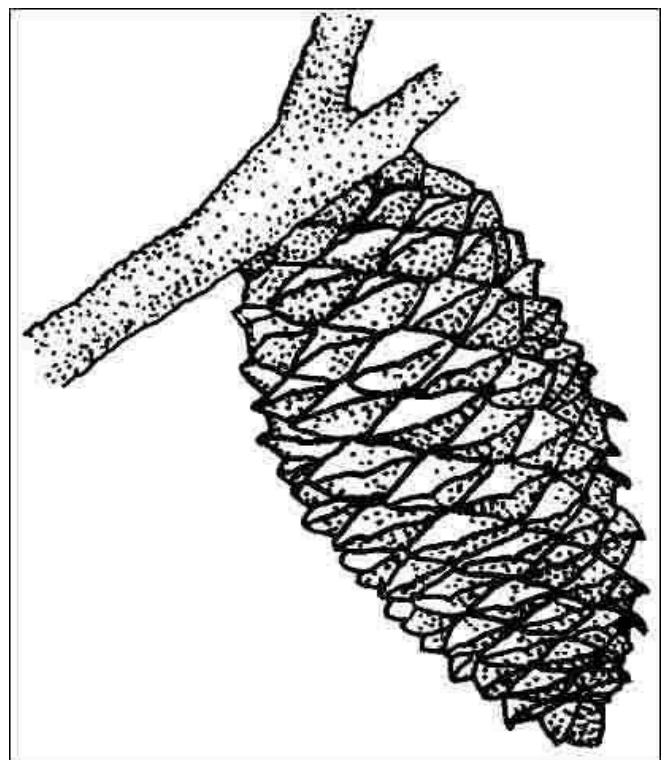


Figure 4. Fruit

Current year twig thickness: medium

Wood specific gravity: 0.48

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

The trunks on Sand Pine are rarely straight. The tree usually grows with a portion of the crown missing or with a lean to one side. This may contribute to the unpopularity of the tree in the landscape trade. However, this attribute can make it well suited for planting as an accent in any large scale landscape. It is especially useful and attractive when planted in a lawn area as a single specimen. It certainly has its place in reclamation sites as a colonizer of poor soils. The tolerance to dry, sandy soils should make this tree adaptable to conditions created near asphalt and other hot areas in urban landscapes.

Sand Pine should be grown in full sun on any well-drained soil. The tree is highly drought- and salt-tolerant.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

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