

Abies, Fir (*Pinaceae*)

With their very geometrical, almost conical silhouettes, firs are among the most majestic and elegant of conifers. Widely present in woods and forests, some species play a key role as ornamental or landscaping plants in parks and large gardens, or in public or private green spaces. This is owing to their habit and colour of needles, as well as the vivacity of their flowers in spring (the male ones always separate from the female, on the same plant) and the beauty of their very showy cones, always erect (while *Picea* ones droop). Originating from the temperate regions of Europe, North Africa, Asia and North America, firs (with a few exceptions) grow better in fairly damp climates and in deep, humus-rich soils. They grow moderately in soft, light soil, which is better for pines.



concolor, Colorado Fir

Native to the western regions of North America where they grow in the Rocky Mountains reaching as high as 3000 mt and sometimes growing to up to 80 mt. In Europe they rarely grow taller than the size we have indicated. Introduced into Italy around 1850. Conical habit, broad when the plant is young and becoming narrower later. Never sheds its bottom branches at ground level. Long needles, glaucous green on both sides. Male flowers yellow tinged with pink; female flowers yellow. Bluish-violet and purple cones. Suitable for dry, poor soil. Withstands extreme ranges in temperature.

Abies



**concolor "Argentea"
(*A. concolor candicans*)**

Lovely variety of *A. concolor* admired for its longer needles of a magnificent steel blue colour. Grows less tall and more slowly, especially when young.

lasiocarpa var. *Arizona*

Origin: Arizona, New Mexico. Conifer, conical habit with very dense branches. Needles an exceptional blue-grey colour, up to 3.5cm long. Unusual soft bark. Cones 6-8cm long, oblong-cylindrical, dark purple, grey when mature. Prefers deep, fresh, permeable soil.



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lasiocarpa
var. **Arizonica "Compacta"**

Variety of above species with slower growth and conical to oval habit. Grey-blue leaves.

nordmanniana, Caucasian Fir

Origin: Caucasus. Perfectly conical conifer. Branches in regular horizontal planes which start from the ground and do not thin out even in adult specimens. Luxuriant bright green leaves, silver on the underside. Beautiful flowers in spring. Extremely decorative cones, 12-15cm long, green initially and then violet when mature. Tolerates calcareous soil. Used all over Europe for Christmas trees.





nordmanniana "Pendula"

A variety of the above with flexuous, weeping habit as the main branches hang down from the whole length of the trunk which also bends down at the top. Needles, flowers, cones the same as *Abies nordmanniana*

nordmanniana "Robusta"

Origin: selected in Senecouse (France) in 1866.
Differs from type as follows:

- denser and more compact vegetation
- longer needles, darker green and glossier on top, more silvery underneath
- does not grow so tall.



Abies



numidica, Algery Fir

Native to Algeria's Kabila mountains, where it grows on north-facing calcareous terrain. Pyramid-shaped. Needles are green on top, with two silver lines on underside, rigid but inert, short and wide, dense, distributed all round the branch. Tolerates poor soils, resists cold, even if icy and prolonged.

pinsapo "Aurea", Spanish Golden Fir

Variety of *A. pinsapo* (native of Spain), reproduced by grafting. Grows very slowly and has erect habit, regular pyramid, broad-based. Short, stiff needles, arranged radially around branches, are surprisingly bright golden-yellow. Beautiful cherry-red flowers. Long, green cylindrical cones 10-15 cm, brown when mature. Prefers dry climate and soil, withstands chalk. Suitable also for small gardens.



Abies



pinsapo Glauca, Blue Spanish Fir

Similar to the above, but with distinctly blue-grey needles. Identical flowers and cones.

**procera Glauca
(*A. nobilis* "Glauca")**

Origin: N. America (Oregon, Washington), where it reaches greater dimensions than in Europe. Conifer initially conical, later broad column. If, as often happens, the topmost shoot is missing, it becomes a spreading, picturesque bush. Needles from grey-green to bright blue-green. Cones: the largest of all abies, green and brown.

