Western Hemlock

Tsuga heterophylla

Height: 90 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

A stately and beautiful conifer of the Pacific northwest forests, with soft needles and an open habit of growth, upright and broadly conical; needs adequate moisture, rich, acidic and organic soils and shelter from drying winds

Ornamental Features

Western Hemlock is primarily valued in the landscape for its distinctively pyramidal habit of growth. It has dark green foliage with grayish green undersides and tinges of chartreuse which emerges light green in spring. The glossy sprays of foliage remain dark green throughout the winter. The brick red fruits are held in cones in mid fall.

Landscape Attributes

Western Hemlock is an evergreen tree with a strong central leader and a distinctive and refined pyramidal form. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which can make it a great accent feature on this basis alone.

This tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Western Hemlock is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Vertical Accent
- Windbreaks and Shelterbelts



Western Hemlock
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Western Hemlock foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Western Hemlock will grow to be about 90 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 70 years or more.

This tree performs well in both full sun and full shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.