

## *Pinus cembroides* Mexican Pinyon<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

A native North American tree, Mexican Pinyon is usually found 20 to 30 feet tall with a spread of 15 to 20 feet, although it may sometimes be larger (Fig. 1). It forms a compact, conical silhouette, producing a rounded canopy with age, and the lower branches are maintained on the tree, providing dense cover to the ground unless shaded-out by other growth. The stiff, blue/green needles are 1 to 1.5 inches long and the small, one to two-inch, yellow or red/brown cones mature and drop in autumn. The seeds found within the cones are quite popular with many birds and mammals - including man. Eaten either raw or toasted, Pinyon Pine nuts have a wonderful flavor.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Pinus cembroides*

**Pronunciation:** PIE-nus sem-BROY-deez

**Common name(s):** Mexican Pinyon, Pinyon Pine

**Family:** *Pinaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5B through 8 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** Bonsai; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

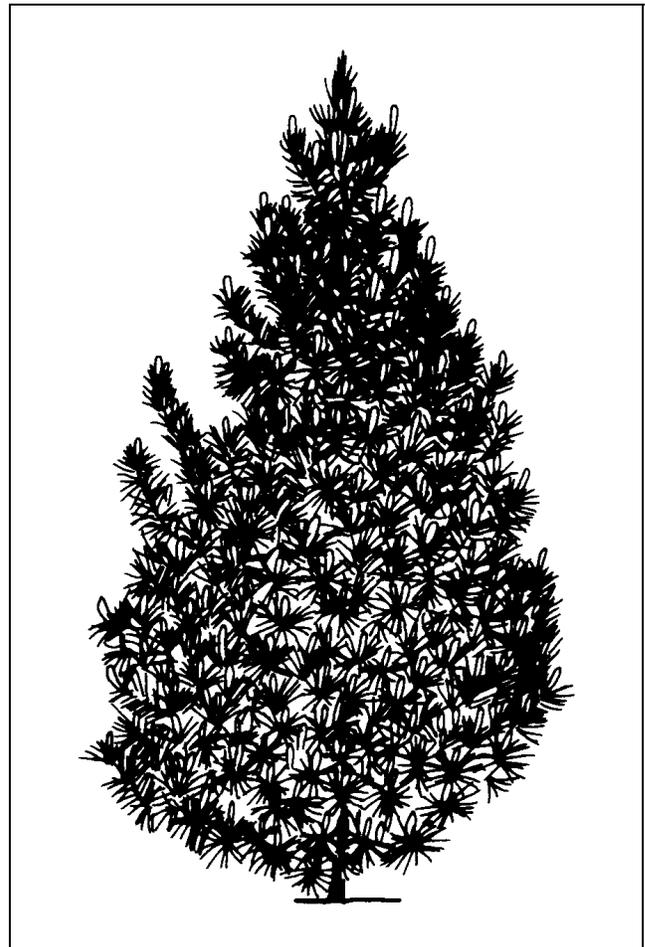


Figure 1. Young Mexican Pinyon.

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 feet

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** round

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate; spiral (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** needle-like (filiform)

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen; fragrant; needle leaf evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** blue or blue-green; green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** red; yellow

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** irregular; oval; round

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant



Figure 3. Foliage of Mexican Pinyon.

**Current year twig color:** gray

**Current year twig thickness:** medium; thick

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun

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

**Drought tolerance:** high

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

Mexican Pinyon should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil, tolerating dry, poor, alkaline soils but not wet soils. It is probably best not to irrigate this tree much after it is established in the landscape.

### Pests

One pest of Mexican Pinyon is the Pine tip moth. Although it will kill some new growth, the result is simply to make the tree more compact since it has a pruning effect.

### Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.