Balsam Fir

Abies balsamea

Balsam Fir
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 50 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 1a

Description:

A delicate spire-like evergreen of the northern forests with soft dark green needles, very upright and open; quite particular about its growing conditions; not for exposed or windy sites

Ornamental Features

Balsam Fir is primarily valued in the landscape for its distinctively pyramidal habit of growth. It has dark green evergreen foliage. The needles remain dark green throughout the winter. The smooth gray bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Balsam Fir foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Balsam Fir is an evergreen tree with a strong central leader and a distinctive and refined pyramidal form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Balsam Fir is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Vertical Accent

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Planting & Growing

Balsam Fir will grow to be about 50 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 70 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for sandy, 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.