

Douglas-fir*Scientific:* Pseudotsuga menziesii (Mirb.) Franco*Primary category:* Tree*Habitat:* Forests*Description (by Bosky Dell Natives):*

A fast-growing conifer (100-250 ft) with a dense crown and soft, spirally arranged needles. The cones are very distinctive; they are 3-4" long and have bracts that resemble pitchforks or rat tails sticking out from beneath the scales.

We have an abundance of Douglas-fir in the Willamette Valley; it is also plentiful eastward from the Cascade crest to the Rocky Mountains, where it coexists with all the other major coniferous species.

Douglas Fir may be grown as a specimen tree or as a screen in rows or drifts. It is a beautiful ornamental for large gardens, and a small woodlot in larger suburban gardens will provide wildlife habitat and privacy. It is an important source of cover for birds; cavity-nesters use older trees. Seeds are eaten by squirrels and birds, including siskins and crossbills.

The trunk and branches provide a rich source of insects for chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. The pine white butterfly uses the tree's foliage for its larvae. As do many moths.

Sun/part sun (when young), low water.

Images of Pseudotsuga menziesiibing.com/images[See all images >](#)*Lewis and Clark's journal entries (by Bosky Dell Natives):*

Lewis and Clark collected a Douglas Fir specimen on the banks of the Columbia. In his journal entry of February 4, 1806, from Fort Clatsop, Lewis wrote "There are several species of fir in this neighbourhood which I shall describe as well as my slender botanical skill will enable me and for the convenience of comparison with each other shall number them". Lewis then wrote detailed descriptions of six evergreen coniferous tree species over the next few days, including Sitka spruce, western hemlock, grand fir, Pacific silver fir, Douglas fir, and western white pine.

Of Douglas fir he wrote "it affords but little resin and the wood is reddish white 2/3ds of the diameter in the center, the balance white, somewhat porous and tough . . . The leaves are acerose, 1/20th of an inch in width, and an inch in length, sessile, inserted on all sides of the bough . . . And more thickly placed than in either of the other species . . . The upper disk has a small longitudinal channel and is of a deep green tho' not so glossy as the balsam fir, the under disk is of a pale green." Lewis included a detailed description of the cone, and an illustration of the cone bract in his notes for February 9.