

Grand Fir

Abies grandis



“A

Hesquiat story tells of a woman who used grand fir boughs to stay warm after she was shunned in her village for having a child out of wedlock.”

Pojar and MacKinnon. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast

Grand fir and Douglas fir are the most common coniferous trees along the Nature Trail. Grand fir grows in the rain shadow areas of the Olympic Peninsula, as well as drier areas of the Pacific Northwest, as far south as Northern California. A beautiful, stately tree, growing to 260 ft or more, it is prized for its lumber and for its popularity as a Christmas tree.

The new growth on a Grand fir is lustrous, brilliantly yellow-green. The needles are arranged in a spiral, but each is twisted at the base so that all lie in two fairly flat rows on either side of the shoot. On the lower leaf surface, two green-white bands of stomata are prominent. Different length needles, but all lined up in a relatively flat plane, is a quick way to identify this species.

The bark is thin, grayish brown and splotched with white. Because the bark is so thin, the tree cannot withstand forest fires. Control of fires has allowed the tree to spread widely over the last 50 years. The cones grow high in the crown of the tree, where they fall apart during the autumn, releasing winged seeds that can “fly” for a considerable distance, effectively spreading throughout the forest.

All parts of the tree are useful to Native People, for practical and ceremonial purposes. The crushed needles release a balsam-like scent that is used in purification rituals and as an incense. Left whole, the smaller branches are used as decorative clothing for Wolf Dancers. Canoes, bows, dyes, halibut hooks, medicinal teas and a treatment for balding are all derived from the Grand Fir.

Commercial uses are as numerous, not only as winter decorations but also as a source of building lumber and flooring material. It is a beautiful landscape tree for large areas, growing as much as 3 feet a year in favorable conditions.

http://www.nwplants.com/business/catalog/abi_gra.html

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abies_grandis

Pojar, Jim and MacKinnon, Andy. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast