

# BUNYA PINE

*Araucaria bidwillii* Hook.

ARAUCARIACEAE

Bunya Pine belongs to the group of well-known subtropical softwood trees collectively known as kauri pines. This group consists of *Agathis robusta* (Queensland Kauri Pine), *Araucaria cunninghamii* (Hoop Pine), and the Bunya Pine. These are all fine timber trees native to the rainforests of eastern Australia, mainly Queensland, the Hoop Pine extending to New Guinea. They are often a feature of the skyline, towering over other species in the rainforests where they occur.

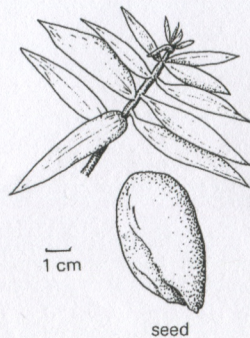
Bunya Pine has a very restricted natural distribution, and is only found in Queensland between Gympie and the Bunya Mountains, with an isolated occurrence much further north near Port Douglas. The tree favours rich volcanic soils, preferably in moist valleys and at low elevations. Rainfall is 370–1250 mm, mainly in summer. Bunya Pine always occurs as a scattered tree dominating other species in the area. It is a particularly striking tree, growing to 50 m with a large symmetrical dome-shaped crown like an elongated beehive.

The 60–120 cm diameter trunk is a long, straight, cylindrical bole, tapering only slightly to the top of the tree. The branches which radiate from the trunk are almost horizontal, but with a slight downward trend. They converge towards the top of the tree. The dark grey bark is hard and rough over the trunk and branches and is cracked into thin, horizontal scales. The crowded, hard, dark green leaves are flat and glossy, and spiral from the branchlets.

The male 'flowers', which are long thin spikes at the ends of the branchlets, appear in September–October on the same tree as the female 'flowers'. These arise laterally from the branchlets and are composed of crowded carpels which develop into fruiting cones. These cones are pineapple-shaped, large and woody, up to 30 cm long by about 20 cm in diameter. They contain large seeds with a milky flesh and were once relished by the Aborigines.

Bunya Pine yields a similar timber to the other kauri pines, all of which are prominent Australian softwoods.

Although too large for average gardens, it is occasionally planted as a park tree and grows successfully as far south as Adelaide provided there is adequate moisture.



cone (greatly reduced)

cone scale

seed

1 cm