

Norfolk Pines

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Even though this native of Norfolk Island, Australia, isn't really a pine, the nickname "star pine" is most appropriate. Its branches have needles like those on a pine tree and branch out in a star shape from a woody trunk. The shiny, dark green needles are short, cylindrical, and borne all around the branches. It looks very much like the traditional Christmas tree starting with wide branches at the bottom and getting narrower toward the top. Its formal appearance makes it a hit indoors, where it can serve as a replacement for the family Christmas tree, decorations and all.

Where as this pine will grow up to a hundred feet outdoors, indoors they grow anywhere from a few inches up to six feet tall and one to four feet wide. They are very easy to grow under the right care and conditions. The key is to give the Norfolk Pine bright, filtered sunlight, moist soil, and a daily misting. IF any of these conditions are missing, the Norfolk pine will lose lots of lower branches, which will turn yellow and fall off.

It takes average temperature, but keep it cool in the winter months. Humidity helps it retain its lower branches. There are few problems with the Norfolk pine, but these problems do include spider mites, mealy bugs, and scale insects. It's not recommended to prune the Norfolk pine, as it reacts badly to pruning.



Tips:

*Under poor conditions or when watered erratically, Norfolk pine loses lower branches and looks bare; hide its "bare legs" behind other houseplants.

*It grows slowly, so buy one large enough for your immediate needs.