

QA-1063

Will a Norfolk Pine tree survive if planted outside here? It is about seven feet tall and probably needs repotting. - J.P.B.

Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) will not survive the winters in any zone 7 locations if planted outside like other landscape trees. It possible could be grown successfully in zone 9b areas. The only zone 9b area we have in Texas is way down in Cameron County.

If planted and cared for in the lower half of the county they have the potential to reach 200ft. Some tree!

I have not grown them but a cousin of the Norfolk is supposed to grow in your climatic zone that is 7. The tree is commonly called - monkey-puzzle tree or Chilean pine and scientifically it is *Araucaria araucana* or *imbricata*. Actually it is a very important timber tree in Chile.

Here is a suggestion. IF, you are interested in "pine like", "sort of pine like" and/or true pines that will grow in your area let me suggest the following.

1. Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), a moderate to slow grower that may reach 40-60ft tall and 30-40ft wide.
2. Deodora Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*), a rapid grower when cared for with heights of 40-60ft and spreads of 20-30ft.
3. Leyland Cypress (*Cupressocyparis leylandi*), a rapid grower under good conditions that is 22-40ft tall by 15-30ft wide. I love this tree! We first used one thirteen years ago as a live Christmas tree. Afterwards we planted it in our landscape and it has done great. Good growth and color and it is not ... Sticky like some evergreen trees are.
4. Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergiana*), a moderate to rapid grower that will grow 40-60ft tall and 20-30ft wide. This is a pine tree for all of Texas.
5. Austrian Pine (*Pinus nigra*), a slow growing pine that will reach 60-80ft tall and 30-40ft wide.

Now is a good time to plant any of landscape these. If you can't locate them in your area you should be able to do so in metropolitan or larger cities areas

Now through May is a good time to repot your tropical Norfolk Island pine should you decide to do so. If your tree gets to tall for your home I have a few suggestions for you. Raise the ceiling, lower the floor, or both, construct a tall

green house, give it to a conservatory or cut the top out of it and keep on growing that tropical pine tree inside your home.

Last spring I planted two Kieffer pear trees. One of the trees has grown straight up for eight feet. It has yet to branch but has put on one leaf after another. They were cut back at planting to their proper height. Should we prune again or what?
- A. M. K.

Kieffer is highly resistant to fire blight, which is great. It is a vigorous tree, heat tolerant, very productive and should start to produce fruit in five years. That is if you have another variety of pear at your place or one is near by. Why? Because Kieffer is self-sterile and can't produce fruit no matter how old it is if it doesn't get pollinated. I bring this up because you have planted two of the same variety. They will not pollinate each other. So, if other pear varieties are not near you will need to plant a pollinator. The variety Moonglow is great for this, fresh eating and canning. It usually begins producing fruit in six years. Moonglow also has good fireblight resistance. These two varieties work very well together. If the need is there, by planting a Moonglow -NOW- you should be in production in a relative short time.

Young pear trees should be trained similar to apple and pecan trees by a system called a modified central leader system. You and anyone else that is interested should be able to acquire complete "Fact Sheets" from your local Agent with Texas Cooperative Extension on this subject.

But let me go over a few things. I assume when you planted your Kieffers they were cut in half. At the end of the first growing season cut the central leader in half again. When the second growing season ends cut the central leader in half again. Select 3-4 scaffold branches 2-3ft above the ground at equal spacing around the tree and head back 1/4. Remove the remaining limbs. I sure hope this helps to get you on the right track.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist†Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Native Texan, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom™. Send your lawn, garden and landscape questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net

Copyright 2005 by Groom Media and all rights are reserved.

