



Scots Pine

Latin: *Pinus sylvestris*

Irish: *Péine albanach*



Courtesy of Coillte Teoranta

The Scots Pine is an evergreen coniferous (cone-bearing) tree. It is the national tree of Scotland and usually lives for up to 200 years. The oldest Scots Pine on record is thought to be about 700 years old.

The Scots Pine died out in Ireland hundreds of years ago, but it was brought back into the country again during the 1800s. Now it grows wild once more.

Description: The Scots Pine is a big tree with a long, straight trunk. Its thick, rough bark is a grey-brown colour on the lower trunk and a flaky orange colour near the top. It can grow up to 1 metre a year and reach up to 30 metres high when mature.

The leaves of the Scots Pine look like prickly, silver-green needles when fully grown. In May, yellow and red flowers grow on the tree. The yellow flowers are male and the red flowers are female. These red flowers eventually form cones, which protect the seeds. Finches (a native bird species) love the seeds of the Scots Pine. Owls often use the tree for nesting.

Uses: The Scots Pine produces a resin. This is used as a source of turpentine, which painters use. It is also used as a source of rosin for violin bows.

Ogham: Ogham, the Celtic alphabet system, was based on trees. The Celts believed trees had different characteristics, emotions and magical or healing powers. The letters of this alphabet were linked to the names of trees.

The Ogham letter for the pine tree was 'A' (ailim).