

Araucaria cunninghamii**Araucariaceae****Eastern Australia, New Guinea**

COMMON NAMES: English: Hoop pine, Moreton Bay pine.

DESCRIPTION: A tall evergreen tree up to 36 m with **spreading, widely spaced upcurved branches bearing dense tufts of branchlets**. The trunk can reach a massive 3 m in diameter. **BARK:** Shiny with a copper hue when young. With age, rough, **flaking, exposing shiny brown underbark, hoop-like rings made by horizontal cracking**. **LEAVES:** Young leaves rather triangular, sharply pointed, 1–2 cm long, but mature leaves softer, narrow and curved inwards, overlapping, crowded along the branchlets, all dark green. **CONES:** Male cones soft, to 7 cm long, in hanging clusters, turning orange-red with pollen; female cones hard and green about 8 cm and erect, covered with scales, each with a sharp recurved tip.

ECOLOGY: A native of rainforests in eastern Australia and New Guinea. It has been introduced into East Africa mainly as an ornamental and avenue tree, but also planted in plantations at low altitudes in central Uganda. Occasional in Nairobi. Agroclimatic Zones I–III.

USES: Timber, ornamental, Christmas tree.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings.

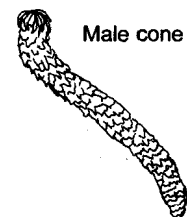
SEED: Mature cones collected and seed collected by shaking out. Seedlings are difficult to raise as germination and survival rates are low. Sow seeds in beds and transplant into pots; 2,400–4,000 seeds per kg. **treatment:** Street nurseries in Nairobi soak seeds in water until they send out a radical (about 5 days later). They are then transplanted individually into pots. **storage:** Seeds can be dried and stored but it is best to sow as soon as possible after collection.

MANAGEMENT: A moderately fast-growing tree. Some pruning may be required.

REMARKS: Occasionally used as a Christmas tree. Several other araucarias are found in Kenya. Probably the most noticeable is Chile pine (*A. araucana*) or the monkey puzzle, so named due to its spiny nature that 'would

puzzle a monkey to climb'. This Chilean tree can grow to 24 m with a trunk diameter of 1.2 m. Leaves glossy, dark green, rigid, long lasting and fiercely prickly. Branches long and interwoven, especially in young trees. Cones globular, to 15 cm long, bearing edible seeds (Chile nuts). It does well in cool humid climates. Young trees need pruning. Another fairly common species is *A. bidwillii* (English: Bunya pine, Bunya bunya) originally from the rainforests of south-east Queensland, Australia. This rather slow grower can reach a height of 36 m, developing a domed crown as it matures. Branches are long, rather sparse and arising from the main trunk almost at right angles. Leaves are up to 5 cm long, flat, dark and prickly. Cones are large, pineapple-like and weighing up to 7 kg or more with large edible seeds. Needs good rainfall in warm areas but does well in dry cool highlands. Does not thrive well at seashores. Other araucarias include *A. heterophylla* or Norfolk Island pine, a beautiful fast-growing tree to 30 m with a regular branching pattern. This can thrive well near the shore. *A. cunninghamii* is less regular in shape than other araucarias, the wide-spreading branches having tufts of leafy branchlets. Altogether, the genus has about 18 species.

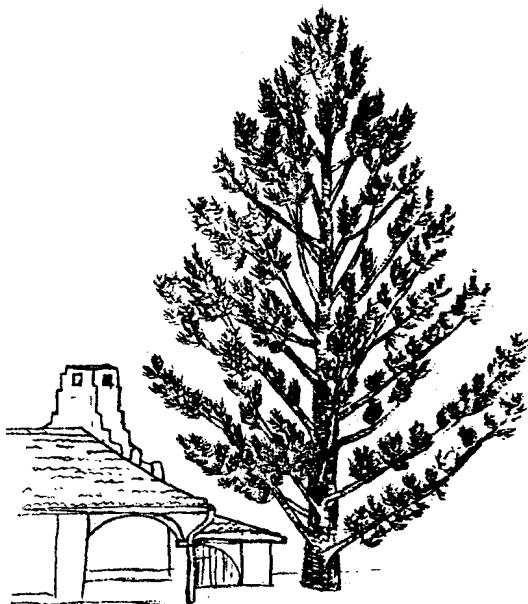
FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Bein et al., 1996; Jensen, 1999; Katende et al., 1995; Noad and Birnie, 1989; Storrs, 1979.



Male cone



Seed



Female cone

