

## 18 Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*

Scots pine is an evergreen conifer native to northern Europe. Mature trees grow to 35m and live for up to 700 years. The bark is a scaly orange-brown, which develops plates and fissures with age. Twigs are green-brown and hairless.

### **Did you know?**

Scots pine is the only truly native pine in the UK. It thrives in heathland and is widely planted for timber. It is widely found in the Scottish Highland Caledonian pine forests. In 2014, it was voted the national tree of Scotland.

### **Value to wildlife.**

The Caledonian forest is a priority habitat under the **UK Biodiversity Action Plan** and is home to rare species such as the creeping lady's tresses and lesser twayblade orchids; the Scottish wood ant and Rannoch looper; and the capercaillie, crested tit and Scottish crossbill. Mammals include red squirrel, pine marten and Scottish wildcat. Scots pines in southern England are also the main caterpillar foodplant for the pine hawk-moth.

### **Mythology and symbolism.**

Some spiritual significance can be traced back to Celtic times. In England, Scots pines were planted around farmsteads as windbreaks, and pines growing along old droveways helped travellers find their way in inclement weather.

### **Uses of Scots pine.**

The timber is one of the strongest softwoods available and is widely used in the construction industry. It is used to make poles, pit props, gate posts and fencing. The tree can be tapped for resin to make turpentine. Rope can be made from the inner bark, tar from the roots and a dye from the cones. Dry cones can be used as kindling for fires.



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