

# BUNYA BUNYA

## (Bunya Pine)



### **DISTRIBUTION**

The bunya-bunya pine is found throughout the south east Queensland coastal ranges and rainforests.

### **DESCRIPTION**

It is a large, majestic, erect, evergreen tree, 30 to 50 m tall and 10 to 20 m wide. The tree has a straight trunk with black/brown bark, and dark, glossy-green, stiff leaves, 1cm to 5cm by 0.5cm to 1 cm, ending with a sharp point. The tree bears large, dark green cones, 20cm to 30cm long, by 15cm to 20cm wide. The cones resemble green pineapples, and contain numerous seeds up to 2.5cm long.

The tree often looks like a giant arrowhead or domed 'beehive'. Both male and female cones are borne on a single tree but only female cones contain the edible nut. Some trees take at least ten years to set cones.

Cones are usually set triennially, but annual setting is aided by planting more than one tree. The cones can weigh up to 10 kg each, with each scale bearing a single egg-shaped seed. Each seed weighs 15g. Because of its importance to the Australian Aborigines' diet, it was once illegal to cut the tree. Now, unfortunately, it is logged.

### **CULTIVATION**

Bunya-bunya pines are cool-tolerant and very hardy trees (frost tolerant to about  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). The trees are not suitable for home gardens because of their size and the potential health hazard when they drop their cones in autumn.

## PROPAGATION

Propagation is either from seeds or cuttings.

## CULINARY

The seeds are eaten raw or roasted. They are very tasty (much like chestnuts with a slight pine flavour) and nutritious. They are packed with protein, carbohydrates, potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, sodium, fibre and fat. They can be boiled and eaten hot.

