

# *Araucaria columnaris*

**Common name:** Cook's Pine, Christmas Tree

**Family:** Araucariaceae

**Habit:** Tree

**Location:** Central Lawn, Science Block and Veer Astha Bhawan Lawn

**Distribution:** The Cook pine, called Christmas Tree in India, is a tree native to the Cook Island, north-east of Australia in the South Pacific.

## **Description:**

The bark of the Cook pine peels off in thin paper like sheets. Can reach 60 m in natural habit. But more commonly grown as a house-plant in pots. The relatively short, mostly horizontal branches are in whorls around the slender, upright to slightly leaning trunk. The branches are lined with cord-like, horizontal branchlets. The branchlets are covered with small, green, incurved, point-tipped, spirally arranged, overlapping leaves. The young leaves are needle-like, while the broader adult leaves are triangular and scale-like. The female seed cones are scaly, egg-shaped, and up to 6 inches (15 cm) long. The smaller, more numerous male pollen cones are at the tips of the branchlets and are scaly, foxtail-shaped, and 2 inches (5 cm) long. The bark peels off in papery strips and is rough, gray, and resinous. The trees have a slender, spire-like crown and look like unusually tall, thin Christmas trees.

**Uses:** Young trees are often grown as houseplants in areas where the winters are too cold. The wood of large trees is used in construction, furniture, and shipbuilding. *Araucaria* is one of the important traditional plants for the treatment of toothache. Several pharmaceutical potentialities include antitumor, gastroprotection, anti-inflammation, antipyretic, and free radical scavenging.

