

Pinus mugo 'Tannenbaum'

By

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This compact 'living Christmas tree' is perfect for Minnesota's urban landscapes. Tannenbaum was selected as one of the best out of 100 from McCrory Gardens mugo seedling trial beds by Iseli Nursery. This mugo pine cultivar is a zone 2 dwarf evergreen that gives great color for our long cold winters.

To some, another variety of the mugo pine might not be all that exciting, but this one is truly different. Tannenbaum is believed to be the first single stem tree form of the mugo pine that has been produced and made available on the market. This single stem gives it a true tree form. The original tree is 25 years old, 12 feet high and 6 feet wide. Tannenbaum although it starts off more cone shaped when planted it will develop into a more pyramidal shape as it matures. The average growth rate is about 8-10 inches annually. The size of this dwarf evergreen tree is one of the main reasons that I like it so much. It's small uniformly shaped growth makes it a perfect evergreen for today's urban landscapes.

In 1989 Allen Craig, a sales representative for Iseli nursery, met Norm Evers, an instructor and director of South Dakota State Arboretum and McCroy Display Gardens at South Dakota State University, Brookings. Evers was continuing a research project that was started by Dale Herman. Dale Herman had gathered 25 mugo pine seeds from 46 different sites in the plants natural range. His goal was to monitor growth characteristics such as compact size, upright growth tendencies, growth rate and needle length. When Craig and Evers went through this test plot they found three plants that showed commercial properties. One of the cuttings they took was a true single leader tree form specimen. The cuttings were sent to Iseli Nursery. They grafted these shoots to the rootstock of *Pinus Sylvester* (scotch pine). This is how Tannenbaum is still propagated today. The seed grown plants show too much diversity. The rooted varieties take too long to develop; thus the plants are vegetatively grown and grafted to the inexpensive *P. sylvestris*.

Tannenbaum prefers full sun locations, but can withstand part-shade. It also likes well drained loose soil, but is very adaptable to any soil type. It is best used in landscape plantings as a group or mass planting. It can however create a nice look as a foundation planting or even an evergreen border.

This evergreen can be easily identified by 2 needles per a fascicle. The dark green needles average about 2" in length and curve slightly. The bark appears gray and is scaled in appearance and does not peel. It does produce small cones that have a dark ring at the base.

There is only a couple of pest issue to effect the Tannenbaum. The first one is scale, it can develop on the needles and cause some minor problems. The second one is the shoot tip moth which can invade and damage new candles in the spring. At this time there doesn't appear to be any disease that affects this variety.

This wonderful evergreen was named Tannenbaum for its dwarf pyramidal form, which is why it is often referred to as the 'living Christmas tree'. Its great winter color, and its tough zone 2 hardiness make the Tannenbaum mugo pine great for Minnesota urban landscaping. When the supply starts to catch up to the demand this will become one of the best evergreens to use in your landscape designs.