On the Trail of the Lonesome Pine

Follow the map on the back.

Pines are the most abundant trees in the Northern Hemisphere. They are conifers, carrying male cones with pollen and female cones with seeds. Nearly all pines have needles in bundles of 2s, 3s or 5s. They are very important economically for timber, paper pulp and resin, which contains liquid turpentine and waxy rosin.

There are about 110 species of pine and this Garden has more than 40 species.

**Lodgepole Pine**

*Pinus contorta var latifolia*

This 3-needle pine comes from Canada and the North West US. You can see 3 years’ of female cones on one tree reflecting slow maturation in the Northern forests – this is true of most pines. The common name suggests its use by Native Americans to build their lodges.

**Dwarf Siberian Pine**

*Pinus pumila*

This is a shrubby 5-needle pine from Siberia. In Spring and early summer the clusters of male cones are a spectacular dark red colour.

**Big Cone Pine**

*Pinus coulteri*

Big cone pine, as the name suggests, has the largest cones of any conifer- up to 3 kg in weight! If you go up close to the trunk and look up you should see one big cone. The needles are in 3s and it comes from California and NW Mexico.

**Ponderosa Pine**

*Pinus ponderosa*

This 3-needled pine ranges from British Columbia in Canada, through the Rocky Mountains and down to Mexico.

Walk through the Australasian area and notice that there are no pines to be seen – the pines are Northern Hemisphere plants (there are some pines in Sumatra, just over the equator)
Bhutan Pines
*Pinus wallichiana and P bhutanica*
There are two species of pine called in English the Bhutan pine as they are native to the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Both are five-needle pines with large attractive cones. *P wallichiana* is the blue Bhutan pine. The contrast with *P bhutanica* the nearby white Bhutan pine is subtle, but clear if you stand where you can see both at the same time. The bhutanica has cones just now.

Scots Pine
*Pinus sylvestris*
The ancient Caledonian forest of Scotland was dominated by this 2-needled pine. Also called red pine because of its lovely reddish trunk (seen best in sunlight), it’s a good timber tree. When mature, the lower branches have gone and the crown is more flat-topped than conical.

Bishop Pine
*Pinus muricata*
Bishop pine has cones which only open when they are heated in a fire – the parent tree will be destroyed but the seedlings will thrive on the fertile burnt soil and there is no competition between parent and offspring. The needles are in 2s and you can see the prickly female cones held tight to the branches of the tree.