

White Pine

Pinus strobus

Stately white pine is the tallest native tree in Aitkin County. Thin needles, 2½"-5" long, do not fall in the winter, but stay on the tree for multiple years. White pines keep their lower branches, unlike red pines that self-prune. Cones are generally 4"-8" long. Stands of white pine support wildlife; beaver, hares, porcupine, and deer eat seeds, needles, and bark from these trees. White pines are often grown for lumber and used for construction.

Height: 70' to 85', may grow taller than 100'

Under favorable conditions, white pines initially grow slowly, but increase in height on average 16 inches/year between 10-20 years of age. Maximum height is usually attained between 80 to 120 years of age.

Planting environment:

Soil composition: Sandy soil, sand-loam, silt-loam

Soil moisture: Well-drained, moist but not wet

Sunlight: Intermediate (will grow in mixed sun and shade)

White pine does best when lightly shaded by other vegetation. Seedlings can be planted in areas where existing brush blocks some (but not all) sunlight.

White pine seedlings should be planted at no greater than 800 seedlings/acre, or approximately 8' apart.

Maintenance:

No thinning of white pine seedlings is required. Older trees benefit from having 100 ft² of space, so thinning may be considered for optimal tree growth if planted closer together. As young white pine grows slowly, clearing brush from seedlings for the first few years prevents competition from other species.

Lifespan: Commonly 200 years, but up to 450 years

Top diseases/pests:

1. White pine blister rust
2. Deer (seedlings)

