

Patty's Plants

Norfolk Island Pines

Araucaria excelsa.



These are the only evergreen conifer that will grow happily indoors. We use them as living Christmas trees. Norfolk Island Pines are tropical and native to islands in the South Pacific. In their natural habitat they will grow over 100 feet tall, but will stay 10 feet or less when grown indoors. Long ago, sailing ships scouted the islands for these pines to use as masts.

To select a healthy Norfolk Island Pine, look for one that has rich green foliage. The growth, especially the tips, might still be light green. Look for strong, straight trunks. If it looks like its an usual green color, it was probably sprayed that way for the Holidays. It will get new growth that will make the unnatural green look funny. Choose one that's not sprayed.

Tips for Growing Healthy Norfolk Island Pines

*They like bright light but prefer not to be in the direct sunlight. They will tolerate shade for short periods, they tend to get thin and begin leaning toward the light if kept in low light more than a few weeks.

*They like to be kept slightly dry. Don't let water sit in the saucer for more than an few hours.

*Keep them in a cool location (50-60°). They can tolerate temperatures as low as 40° and will summer successfully outdoors in our area in a shady area.

*When kept indoors, these plants need to be misted for humidity or use a humidity tray.

*During late spring and early summer while they are doing most of their growing, feed them twice a month with a water soluble or liquid plant food. Mix the fertilizer at 1/2 the recommended rate. During the winter, feed once a month with an acid formula. The rest of the year they should be fed once a month at half strength.

*It won't need repotting very often and prefers to be a little bit pot bound.

When you do repot it, use a good houseplant soil and add worm castings to the mix.

*You will have to prune off a few branches from the bottom of the plant. They do shed the lower layers as they grow.

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