

CASUARINA GLAUCA SIEBER EX SPRENG.

Casuarinaceae/Beefwood Family

Common Names: Suckering Australian-pine, swamp she-oak, Brazilian beefwood
Synonymy: *Casuarina lepidophloia* F. Muell. and *C. cristata* Miq. misapplied
Origin: Australia

Botanical Description: Evergreen tree to 20 m (70 ft) tall, with a dense, pyramidal shape. Bark gray-brown, finely fissured, scaly. Branchlets pine-needle-like, green, occasionally waxy, jointed, thin (< 1mm wide), 20-26 cm (8-10 in) long, minutely ridged, glabrous. Leaves reduced to tiny scales, in whorls of 10-17 at joints of branchlets. Flowers unisexual (dioecious), inconspicuous, female in small axillary clusters, male in small terminal spikes; female plants rare in Florida. Fruit a tiny, 1-seeded, winged nutlet (samara), formed in woody cone-like clusters (fruiting heads), these brown, to 1.8 cm (2/3 in) long and 0.9 cm (1/3 in) wide.

NOTE: Differs from *C. equisetifolia* (preceding pages) in having 10-17 leaf scales per whorl, glabrous branchlets, and separate male and female plants. *C. cunninghamiana* also dioecious, but with 8-10 leaf scales per whorl.

Ecological Significance: Introduced to Florida before 1924, and planted widely in southern Florida as windbreaks, roadside trees, and hedges (Morton 1980). Suckers aggressively from widely spreading roots, especially when pruned, creating “local jungles” of dense casuarina branches, excluding other vegetation (Long and Lakela 1971, Morton 1980). Displacing and extremely destructive to native plant communities, tending to completely take over areas it invades (Nelson 1994). Along with *C. equisetifolia*, has had devastating effect on native plant communities of barrier islands along southwest coast, such as Sanibel and Captiva (Morton 1980).

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Scale-like leaves at nodes

SUCKERING AUSTRALIAN-PINE

Distribution: Herbarium specimens collected from naturalized populations in Seminole, Orange, Brevard, Polk, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, Desoto, Highlands, Indian River, Martin, Charlotte, Collier, Broward, Dade, and Monroe counties (Wunderlin *et al.* 1995). Recorded from natural areas in Dade, Lee, Martin, and Palm Beach counties (EPPC 1996).

Life History: Can colonize nutrient-poor soils easily by nitrogen-fixing microbial associations (Wilson 1997). Reproduces prolifically by root suckers; reported until recently as not producing fruit in Florida (Long and Lakela 1971, Morton 1980). Fruiting heads observed in Homestead area (R. Hammer, Miami-Dade Parks Department, 1995 personal communication) and in Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve (D. F. Austin, Florida Atlantic University, 1997 personal communication). Hybrids known to form in the wild in Florida among the 3 species of *Casuarina* mentioned above, which may bear cones (Bailey and Bailey 1976, Morton 1980, Wilson 1997).

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Monoculture, Indian River County