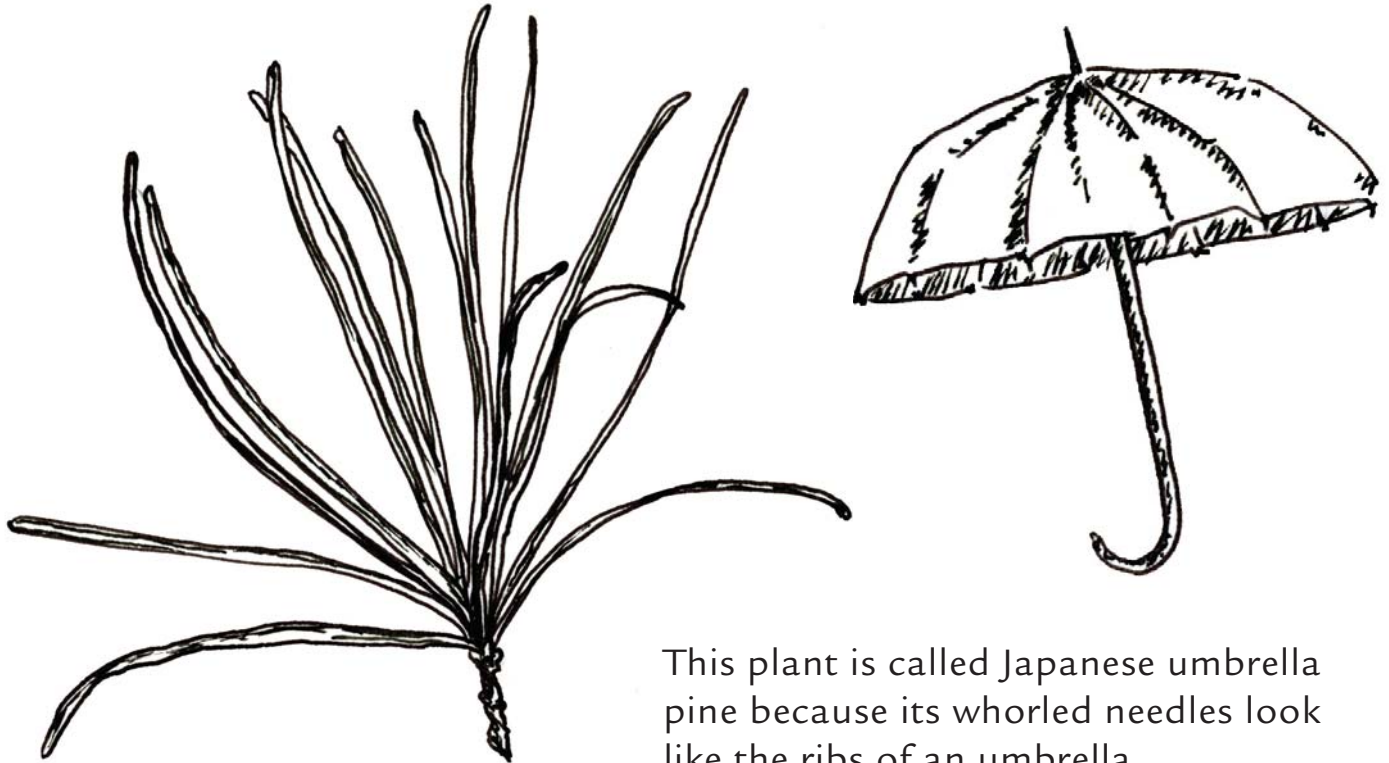


Japanese Umbrella Pine

Sciadopitys verticillata

sound it out: sigh-uh-DOP-ih-tiss ver-tiss-ill-LAY-tuh



This plant is called Japanese umbrella pine because its whorled needles look like the ribs of an umbrella.

It's a Spruce, it's a Pine, no it's *Sciadopitys*!

Although commonly called a pine, *Sciadopitys verticillata* is a unique conifer classified in its own unique family, Sciadopitaceae. Fossil evidence of the Japanese umbrella pine dates back 230 million years. At one time the umbrella pine (and its then numerous relatives) covered what is now Asia, Europe, and North America. Today, it grows naturally only in the cool cloud forests of central Japan, at elevations between 1,500 and 3,000 feet.

Whorled Needles

Sciadopitys verticillata is an evergreen conifer, but its needles are unlike any other conifer. The long, rubbery needles radiate out in a whorl. Plants with whorled leaves typically have three or more leaves per node—the umbrella pine often has more than 12 needles per node!



Bark

Hidden by evergreen foliage, the beautiful bark often goes unnoticed. It is a rich, orange-brown that peels in long strips.

Cones

The female (seed bearing) cones are usually found high up in the tree. These cones are 2-4 inches long with chunky cone scales, and change from green to brown as they ripen in their second year. The male (pollen bearing) cones are only about an inch long, and are found at the ends of lower branches.

Explore Our Collection

There are six Japanese umbrella pines here at the Arnold Arboretum. There is one located at the southeast corner of the Hunnewell Building that was accessioned, April 23 1970 (*).

Make Observations

Some of the oldest specimens (1898) in the Arnold Arboretum are located near the conifer path (*). Older trees lose lower branches. Compare the younger tree near the Hunnewell Building and the older trees on the Conifer Path. Let us know what you observe.

