



Guide to Norfolk Island Pine Care

Norfolk Island Pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*) are a well known houseplant, often used at Christmas time, decorated like a traditional Christmas tree. They are not a true pine tree, but a tropical plant native to Norfolk Island in the South Pacific. They have soft needle-like leaves, a woody trunk and grow in an upright fashion like most evergreen trees. They can grow quite large in their native habitat, but as a houseplant indoors, they typically grow 3 to 6 feet tall, depending on the pot size.



Taking Care of Your Norfolk Island Pine

Soil

Provide regular potting soil with peat moss added in to make it slightly acidic. Sand can also be added for porosity.

Temperature

65 to 70° F with moderate to high humidity is ideal. Norfolks can handle temperatures a little lower, especially in wintertime, but will perish at 35°F and below. Mist regularly or set the plant on a saucer with pebbles and a little water to create beneficial humidity. It can be moved to an outdoor location during the summer months, but acclimate it to bright sunlight slowly so the leaves don't get sunburn.

Light

Provide bright, indirect light from an East, West or South facing window. Turn the plant periodically so all sides get exposed to the light. If the plant seems to be leaning toward the window, it may not be getting sufficient light.

Watering

If the soil feels dry to the touch about one inch down, water thoroughly. Let the water run through the drainage holes at the bottom of the pot. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer. Don't allow your Norfolk to sit in standing water. If you see branches turning brown, especially along the bottom, you may be keeping it too dry. Try to keep it evenly moist.

Fertilizing

Fertilize with a well balanced, water soluble fertilizer once a month during the spring and summer. Hold off fertilizing in wintertime.

Additional Information

Norfolks are known for dropping their bottom branches when stressed. If the loss of lower branches is unattractive, consider planting something like ivy or button ferns along the top of the soil. This would help fill in the empty space and will look quite nice!

They are also relatively slow growing and would only need repotted every 3-4 years.

*Norfolk Island Pines are mildly toxic to animals. Keep away from cats, dogs and livestock.