



# Dragon's Eye Japanese Red Pine

*Pinus densiflora* 'Oculus Draconis'

Pine Family (Pinaceae)

Zones: 4-9

Full Sun

Moderate Water

Location: Conifer Garden

*Pinus densiflora* 'Oculus Draconis', a cultivar of the Japanese Red Pine is known as the Dragon's Eye Pine because of the two yellow bands that mark the otherwise green needles. This banding is said to give the illusion of a dragon's eye when you look at it closely. The yellow banding becomes prominent on new needles by summer and provides a unique appearance to this pine.

Dragon's Eye Pine and other Japanese Red Pines have many unique features that make wonderful additions to a home landscape. One of the best features is that they are slow growers, reaching a height of about 25 feet in 15 years. In addition to its size and growth rate, the trunk is often twisted, giving it an irregular and unique habit. Finally, the bark is often orangish-red when young and peels off in scales. As the tree ages, the bark turns grayish.

The Dragon's Eye Pine loves to bask in bright full sun, well-drained or clay soil and will even tolerate high winds. It has been said that Japanese Red Pines often graced the entrance of Samurai warriors' homes. It may have been chosen because of its ability to tolerate harsh conditions. In our garden, the early spring is the only time this plant requires a little patience; the yellow bands do not appear to be as winter hardy and can look a little drab before falling off and making way for the new foliage to emerge.

Stop by the Conifer Garden and see for yourself what a wonderful addition a *Pinus densiflora* 'Oculus Draconis' can make to your yard.