

Aleppo Pine

Pinus halepensis

*I asked Ron Allen if I could place an article in his section this month as it has a link to the upcoming ANZAC day. Recently my wife and I visited the Canberra National Arboretum. This is a newly planted series of plantations replacing the pine forests burnt down in the horrific bushfires in Canberra on 18th January 2003. Cones of the Aleppo Pine were collected at the site of the ANZAC battle at Gallipoli and a tree grown from the seed is planted at the Australian War memorial. A forest of Turkish Pine *Pinus brutia*, a species native to the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey, has been planted to commemorate Australian service personnel killed in all conflicts. In addition, a number of ceremonial Aleppo Pines, *Pinus halepensis*, have been planted on the summit of Dairy Farmers Hill at the summit at the Canberra Arboretum, propagated from seed of the Lone Pine tree planted at the Australian War Memorial.*

Family—Pinaceae

Natural Distribution—The species is native to North Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean

Habitat—It occurs in some of the more arid more frequently burnt parts of the Mediterranean region from sea level up[to 1700 meters, often on limestone and dolomite.

Description—It is a medium sized evergreen conifer. Its bark is orange red and becomes thick and deeply fissured. The needles become 7cm to 10cm long, slender and a yellowish green. The unopened cones are narrowly conical in shape and ripen to a glossy brown. Tree height 18meters, and it spreads to a width of 10 meters.

Conservation Status—Although it is not classified as a threatened species, there are populations in the east Mediterranean such as the Mount Carmel Nature Reserve, that are being seriously affected by changes in land use and the introduction of other pine species and other Aleppo pine populations. Protection of the old stands and removal of other plantings are necessary to preserve the genetic integrity of the original population of the area.

Its Uses—The timber of this species is not of high quality and its mainly been used for mine props, railway sleepers and telegraph poles, as well as for charcoal and firewood. Resin is also collected from the trees.

References

Information collected on site at the National Arboretum Canberra



Aleppo Pine plantings in the foreground of the Arboretum building



The Lone Pine plantings at the War Memorial

George Pastuch