

Casuarina equisetifolia

Casuarinaceae

Australia

English: Whistling pine

Ecology: The most widespread species of *Casuarina*, mainly found along tropical coastlines, including sandy shores of Africa both East and West, 0–1,500 m. It does well on loose sandy soils with adequate moisture, but cannot withstand waterlogging. The extensive root system and nitrogen-fixing root nodules enable the tree to grow in poor soils. In Chipata and Lundazi Districts the species has been planted around the townships.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, **timber, poles, windbreak, ornamental, nitrogen fixation, dye, tannin** (bark).

Description: An evergreen tree with “weeping” foliage to 20 m. **BARK:** grey-black, cracked. **BRANCHLETS:** **hang down to 30 cm** in crowded tufts. **FLOWERS:** male flowers are seen as yellow pollen-bearing tips to branchlets, and female flowers are tiny heads with hairy red stigmas on woody branches. **FRUIT:** the prickly brown cone-like capsules are **2.5 cm long**, larger than those of *Casuarina cunninghamiana*.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 600,000–900,000.

treatment: Not necessary.

storage: Seed can be stored for up to a year.

Management: Side pruning to get a clear bole.

Remarks: The timber is very hard, heavy and difficult to saw but attacked by termites. The charcoal produces high heat with little smoke or ash. The bark contains tannin and a red dye. An appropriate species for reclaiming and improving sandy soils. A good windbreak species. A tree with potential for growing in sandy areas of the Province.

