

# Planting Oyster Bay pine

*Callitris rhomboidea*



Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of TOURISM, PARKS  
HERITAGE and the ARTS

## General information

Oyster Bay pine (*Callitris rhomboidea*) is one of Tasmania's 11 native conifers. It belongs to a remarkable genus of 16 species occurring right across Australia from the driest ridgetops in the arid outback to the wet gullies of southeastern Tasmania. One species occurs in New Caledonia.

Oyster Bay pine is one of our most attractive and hardy native trees. The timber was much sought after in the early days for building. It is finely figured, structurally stable and has been used in interior boat joinery and fine furniture.

*Callitris* is highly drought tolerant and once established will never need watering. It can be an excellent shade tree and a stand would make a good wind break. It is hardy for coastal situations.

It is not a fast growing species but growth rates vary; the species can attain 30 m on a good site. Fire will kill the trees but there will be good regeneration—provided the specimens are old enough to have accumulated sufficient woody cones (trees start producing cones after about 6 years of age).

## Growing Oyster Bay pine

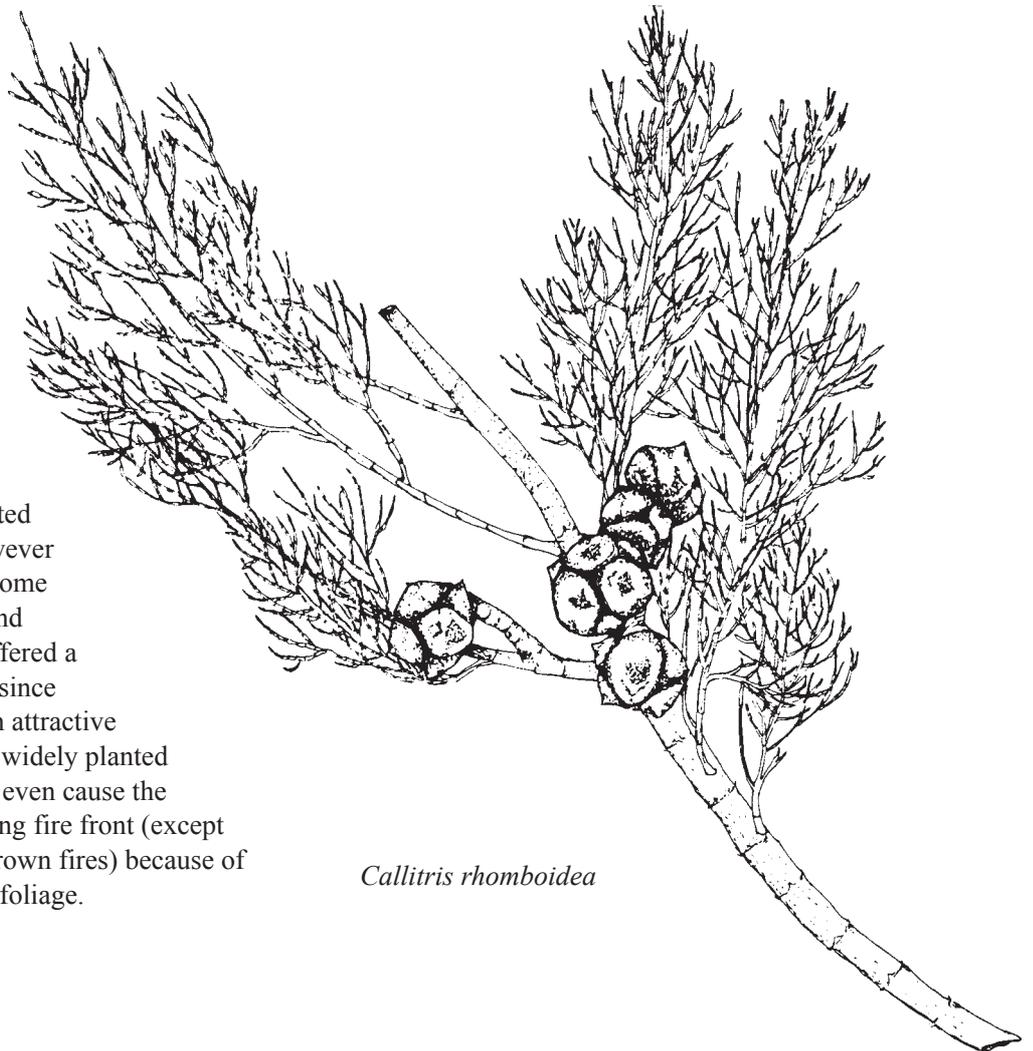
The species occurs to a limited extent on the mainland, however it is a major component of some eastern Tasmanian forests and woodlands. The tree has suffered a great reduction in its extent since European settlement. It is an attractive species that should be more widely planted than it is. A dense stand can even cause the suppression of an approaching fire front (except for intense or fast moving crown fires) because of the dampening effect of the foliage.

## Where should the species be planted?

The species is suited to the climate and soils of much of eastern Tasmania but naturally occurs within the shaded area on the map overleaf. Oyster Bay pine can be planted on any soils except where they are poorly drained, or in areas with severe frosts.

## How can the trees be propagated?

Cut clusters of the dark brown woody cones from trees growing in your area and break up the bunch by hand into a paper bag. Store this in a dry place indoors and within a month or so the cones will have opened. Shake the bag vigorously to free remaining seed from the cones. There will be around 40 seeds to the cone, half of which will be viable.



*Callitris rhomboidea*

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## When should the seeds be planted?

The end of summer is a good time to sow because the seeds will germinate after 3–4 weeks. Seedlings will be established by the following summer. Tussock grasses and other ground covers provide an ideal nursery for the young seedlings. If the ground is hard and bare it is best ripped or dug over first. If a harsh environment such as an old roadway is to be rehabilitated, then after ripping, a light covering of locally obtained organic soil, humus or leaf litter should be spread.

The most important act is to ensure protection of the seedlings from browsing animals, especially sheep. Overlaying the site with a tangle of branches, dead limbs and the like is the most critical part of establishing Oyster Bay pine. Avoid planting flammable species such as tea tree and *Kunzea* amid your Oyster Bay pines — try for a dense stand which can be selectively thinned by hand once seedlings are established.

In the first few years growth tends to be slow; it will accelerate.

## Protecting and expanding existing stands

Protection from grazing is crucial. This can be achieved by fencing if the stand is small. Allow extra width on the perimeter for new *Callitris* to colonise. If fencing is not possible, cut cone bearing branches to lay in gaps and on the outside of the stand.

## Contact

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*Distribution of Oyster Bay  
pine in Tasmania*



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### FURTHER INFORMATION

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