

Q: Do Incense Cedars get the same blight that has killed the Monterey Pines?

A: Many homeowners in the East Bay have paid a high price to have their Monterey Pines removed after being infested with the Pine Pitch Canker fungus. Unfortunately, many of the California native pines are susceptible to the fungus as well. There are several very good alternatives to the Monterey Pines, but at this time all are considered exotic (non-native).

*Pinus canariensis*, Canary Island Pine; *P. pinea*, Italian Stone Pine and *P. thunbergii*, Japanese Black Pine all appear to be resistant to the pathogen and all do well in the soils and climate around the bay.

*Calocedrus decurrens*, sometimes called the Pencil cedar, does not appear to get pitch canker. It is not in the Pine family. It is a lovely, tree with an extensive root system, growing 12-24" a year; drought tolerant once established. *Libocedrus decurrens* can grow in a wide variety of Western soils, in a wide pH range, and can live for a very long time — up to 500 years if conditions are favorable. They are forgiving trees, tolerant even of the high ozone levels found in urban air.