



Picea pungens 'Iseli
Fastigiata'

I'm a true lover of conifers. My English gardening friends shudder at my plebian tastes, but they enjoy green grass and something in flower year-round. Anything that can provide me with true

garden enjoyment in the winter time rates highly in my books. I like the blue foliage of Colorado blue spruce, and love how it contrasts with other evergreens and adds a richness to the overall tapestry of foliage colours. What I don't like about that plant is how rangy it gets as it matures – thinning foliage, gaps in the canopy, and awkward large size.

'Iseli Fastigiata' blue spruce is brighter blue, perhaps because the canopy is more compact, giving a better punch of colour. It has a wonderful columnar form, and requires much less space as it matures. It is ideally suited to planting in a group of conifers, so you can create really interesting foliage combinations.

Like all Colorado spruce cultivars, it appreciates annual lime application. It is hardy to zone 3, and drought tolerant. It makes an excellent windbreak. It's grafted to a regular Colorado blue spruce rootstock, so prefers rich, moist soils. Blue spruce does suffer from occasional bouts of needle cast disease, and this one is the same. Reducing stress by ensuring the soil is neutral or slightly alkaline, occasional application of compost or well-rotted manure will help prevent the problem. This picture was taken at Corn Hill Nursery in New Brunswick.