



K'iid K'iyaaas

GOLDEN SITKA SPRUCE

This tree is the stuff of legends! Glowing brightly against the dark rainforest, a majestic 300-year-old golden spruce grew on the shores of Haida Gwaii, a remote archipelago off BC's central coast. It was a **Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) with golden leaves caused by a rare mutation. The tree is sacred to indigenous Haida peoples, who named it K'iid K'iyaaas, meaning "ancient tree".**

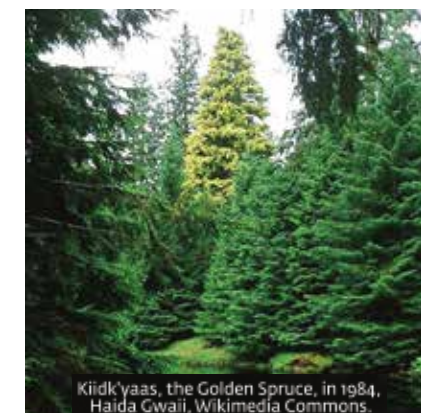
In 1997 the golden spruce starred in a real-life twisted tale of secrets and intrigue involving a murder plot (of a tree, that is), an odd recluse, a mysteriously shipwrecked kayak and an unsolved missing persons case that continues to spark rumours. For the full version of this true crime story, **visit VanDusen's library and check out the award-winning book, *The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness and Greed* by John Vaillant.**

Canada's tallest living tree is a Sitka spruce, measured at over 62.5 metres (205 feet) tall! On the Pacific coast, old growth Sitka spruce forests provide critical habitat for wildlife, including the endangered marbled murrelet.

Pine Family – Pinaceae | Conservation status: Least Concern



Plant from a cutting of K'iid Kiyaaas on Haida Gwaii, growing at UBC Botanical Garden. Photo by Daniel Mosquin.



Kiid'yaas, the Golden Spruce, in 1984, Haida Gwaii, Wikimedia Commons.