Pine Siskin

*(Carduelis pinus)*

The Pine siskin is common year-round in the Puget Sound area. It breeds in coniferous and mixed woods, generally around edges and clearings. The nest is usually hidden on a branch out from the trunk. In winter, this bird can be found in more open areas.

Although this bird looks like a sparrow, it is actually a finch. Pine siskins will often flock with Goldfinches in winter months. Even during breeding season, they will often forage in flocks.

These birds eat mostly seeds with some insects. They will eat the seed of the Noble fir, along with seeds, buds, flower parts, and shoots from many other plants.
This is a large, popular native tree. It prefers sun and acid (not alkaline) soil. At full maturity, it can reach 200 feet (the tallest of the true firs). However, it is possible for it to do well for many years as a potted plant.

It produces 7-inch purplish brown cones (mid-August) that disintegrate on the tree, instead of the full cone falling to the ground. Seed dispersal starts in September. Seeds are eaten by many birds and the tree provides habitat.

The Noble fir is very popular as a Christmas tree. It can be bought as a living Christmas tree and later transplanted outside. However, care must be taken not to kill the tree due to dormancy issues. Check with your local nursery.