



Cupressus arizonica var. *arizonica* Arizona Cypress¹

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INTRODUCTION

This rapidly-growing North American native evergreen reaches 30 to 40 feet in height with a 15 to 25-foot-spread (Fig. 1). It is referred to as *Cupressus glabra* by some botanists. The green foliage has a silver/gray shimmer and the branches are more open than most other species of juniper. The inconspicuous flowers are followed by small, one-inch cones which persist on the tree. The peeling brown bark becomes gray with age. Arizona Cypress is often used as a specimen or windbreak planting and is a common sight in west Texas and the southern High Plains where it tolerates the hot, dry conditions with ease.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Cupressus arizonica* var. *arizonica*

Pronunciation: koo-PRESS-us air-ih-ZAWN-ih-kuh
variety air-ih-ZAWN-ih-kuh

Common name(s): Arizona Cypress

Family: Cupressaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: screen; specimen

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

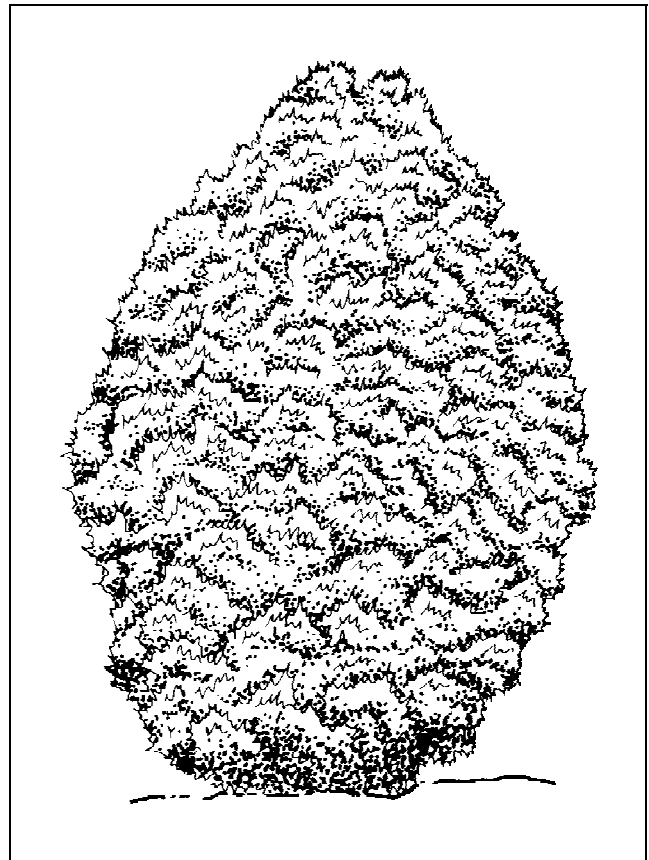


Figure 1. Middle-aged Arizona Cypress.

Crown shape: columnar; pyramidal

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-222, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: scale-like

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green; green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter

problem; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

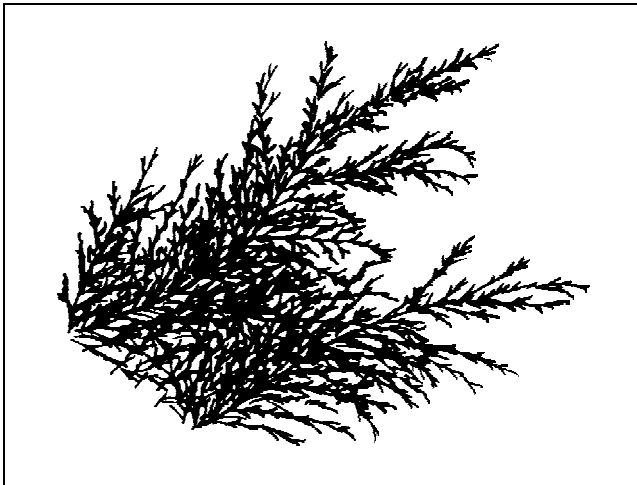


Figure 3. Foliage of Arizona Cypress.

Pests

Bagworms.

Diseases

Juniper blight, especially in cool, humid regions.

A stem canker has devastated large numbers of trees in various parts of the country.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: seeds itself into the landscape

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

It can be found growing with a single trunk or in clumps. It is probably best used in landscapes which are not irrigated since it is susceptible to Juniper blight. Many locations in the eastern part of the country are too humid to successfully grow this tree. It is most often found in the west and in the drier parts of Texas and Oklahoma.

Arizona Cypress should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. Although it will tolerate clay soil, the shallow roots will not gain as secure an anchor as they might in other soils and the tree may, as a result, topple over during wind and rainstorms.

Cultivars of *Cupressus arizonica* include: 'Compacta', low, conical; 'Gareei', silver blue foliage; 'Glauca', leaves silvery-grey; 'Greenwood', medium silver/grey/green; 'Oblonga', horizontal branches, producing oblong effect, leaves grey/green; 'Verhalenii', leaves bright glaucous-blue, softer and more graceful than wild forms; 'Watersii', narrowly pyramidal, compact.

Propagation is by seed or grafting.