INTRODUCTION

This broad, sweeping, conical-shaped evergreen has graceful, flattened, fern-like branchlets which gently droop at branch tips (Fig. 1). Hinoki Falsecypress reaches 50 to 75 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 20 feet, has dark green foliage, and attractive, shredding, reddish-brown bark which peels off in long narrow strips.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Chamaecyparis obtusa
Pronunciation: kam-eh-SIP-uh-riss ob-TOO-suh
Common name(s): Hinoki Falsecypress
Family: Cupressaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: Bonsai; screen
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 75 feet
Spread: 10 to 20 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: pyramidal
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

Figure 1. Mature Hinoki Falsecypress.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
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: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown; green
Current year twig thickness: thin

Flower
Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit
Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate

Other
Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Hinoki Falsecypress should be grown in full sun on moist, well-drained soil, in areas of moderate to high humidity, and preferably where the trees can be protected from harsh winds. It is fairly free of pests and diseases.

Propagation is by cuttings.

There are many cultivars, some quite dwarf. Other cultivars have excellent foliage coloration or unusual growth habit. Cultivars include: ‘Aurea’ - golden foliage; ‘Caespitosa’ - rare, miniature, about six inches tall; ‘Compacta’ - dwarf, about three feet tall, dense, conical; ‘Coralliformis’ - branchlets reddish and contorted; ‘Crippsii’ - broad pyramid with spreading branches and golden foliage; ‘Erecta’ - columnar habit; ‘Ericoides’ - low, blue-gray foliage, ‘Filocoides’ - fern-like; ‘Gracilis’ - compact growth habit, tips of branchlets pendulous; ‘Kosteri’ - dwarf, three to four feet tall, branch tips curved; ‘Mariesii’ - dwarf, foliage variegated with yellowish white; ‘Nana’ - very dwarf, height and spread of two feet; ‘Pygmaea’ - dwarf, two feet tall, wider than tall; ‘Stoneham’ - slow, dwarf, tiered branching; ‘Tetragona’ - slow, dwarf, erect.

Pests

Juniper scale can be controlled by applying pesticides when the crawlers are active.

The bagworm webs dead foliage and other debris together to make a nest. The covering makes the insect difficult to control. The nests can be picked off by hand.

Diseases

Blight can be a problem on young plants in nurseries or old plants in landscape situations. In young plants, branch tips turn brown and die back until the whole branch or young tree is killed. Trees over five years old are less susceptible. When older trees in landscapes are affected by tip blight, entire trees are seldom killed.

Tip blight can infect trees during wet weather. The disease causes sooty pustules on the leaves, bark and cones.

Scorch may look like a disease but is caused by excessive direct sun, freezing stress, drought or mites. Freezing stress can be prevented by shading small plants in winter.