**Cryptomeria japonica ‘Elegans’**  
‘Elegans’ Japanese-Cedar

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### INTRODUCTION

The tree keeps a billowy pyramidal form on one central trunk (Fig. 1). It will reach a height of about 15 feet and spread about 10 feet. The reddish brown bark is ornamental, peeling off in long strips, and is the most pronounced characteristic on old trees. The foliage will become bronzed during the winter but greens up again in spring.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Scientific name:** Cryptomeria japonica ‘Elegans’
- **Pronunciation:** krip-toe-MEER-ee-uh juh-PAWN-ih-kuh
- **Common name(s):** ‘Elegans’ Japanese-Cedar
- **Family:** Taxodiaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 8 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** Bonsai; specimen
- **Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

### DESCRIPTION

- **Height:** 10 to 15 feet
- **Spread:** 6 to 10 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
- **Crown shape:** oval; pyramidal
- **Crown density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** slow
- **Texture:** fine

**Figure 1.** Middle-aged ‘Elegans’ Japanese-Cedar.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** spiral (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** awl-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:** copper
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy

**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

**Trunk and Branches**

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

**Culture**

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

Mites can infest the foliage.

Diseases

Leaf blight and leaf spot are two problems. Leaf blight often causes much of the interior foliage to brown, creating an unsightly specimen. Fungicide sprays help prevent the disease, as does placing the tree so it receives early morning sun to dry the foliage. Keep the foliage as dry as possible.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
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

Provide an acid soil and protection from winter winds. Locate the tree so air circulation is good, particularly during summer to help prevent leaf blight. It thrives best with afternoon shade in southern part of its range. A number of other cultivars are available varying in growth habit and ability to hold green foliage color in the winter. Cryptomeria is tolerant of compacted soil and performs well in parking lots and other tough, urban sites with some irrigation in drought. It makes a wonderful accent, screen, or border tree for small properties due to the compact, dwarf habit.

Propagation is by cuttings which root slowly.

‘Yoshino’ holds green foliage color in the winter.