**Cupressus glabra** ‘Carolina Safire’
Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

The species is a native of the American southwest, and is densely clothed in blue/grey leaves and becomes a narrow pyramid, perhaps reaching 50 to 70 feet tall (Fig. 1). Exceptionally tolerant of hot, dry conditions, Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress is ideal for use as a screen, hedge, or windbreak. The outer red/brown bark breaks off every year, revealing the fresh, new, bright red, smooth inner bark. Foliage of ‘Carolina Safire’ is one of the brightest blues you will ever see. Jump out of the way after planting this cultivar since it springs out of the ground, with young trees growing about six feet each year with irrigation.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Cupressus glabra ‘Carolina Safire’

**Pronunciation:** koo-PRESS-us GLAY-bruh

**Common name(s):** Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress

**Family:** Cupressaceae

**USDA hardness zones:** 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** Bonsai; hedge; screen; specimen

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

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 50 to 70 feet

**Spread:** 10 to 15 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:** fast

**Texture:** fine

---

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-223, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.

2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
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
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

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

Flower

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; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high

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

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid or alkaline soil. If grown with too much moisture or on a poorly-drained clay, a shallow root system will develop making the tree susceptible to wind damage. The species was once widely grown in the southeastern U.S. but may perform best in the drier parts of the southwest, including west Texas and Oklahoma.

Propagation is by cuttings.

**Pests**

No pests are of major concern.

**Diseases**

A stem canker has devastated large numbers of Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress in various parts of the country.