**Juniperus deppeana** ‘Mcfetter’
McFetter Alligator Juniper

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**INTRODUCTION**

This native North American evergreen tree found in the southwestern United States reaches 50 to 60 feet in height and forms a broad, pyramidal or rounded canopy (Fig. 1). The crown probably spreads to about 20 or 25 feet. The trunk is normally rather short and covered with brown, scaly bark. The foliage has a rich blue coloration which stands out in the landscape against any background.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** Juniperus deppeana ‘Mcfetter’
- **Pronunciation:** joo-NIP-er-us depp-ee-AY-nuh
- **Common name(s):** McFetter Alligator Juniper
- **Family:** Cupressaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** native to North America
- **Uses:** Bonsai; hedge; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
- **Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 50 to 60 feet
- **Spread:** 20 to 25 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
- **Crown shape:** columnar; oval
- **Crown density:** dense

**Figure 1.** Mature McFetter Alligator Juniper.
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; fragrant
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: resistant
Current year twig color: brown; green
Current year twig thickness: thin

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: 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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Mcfetter Alligator Juniper can be used as Leyland Cypress has been. Plant it on 15 to 20 foot centers to form a solid blue screen. Growth rate is rapid in full sun.

Mcfetter Alligator Juniper is grown in full sun on well-drained, slightly acid soil. It appears to perform well on clay soils and should be suited for many areas of the southern United States.

Pests

No pests are of major concern at this time. However, the plant has not been grown in the east for very long.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern at this time.