



Platyclusus orientalis Arborvitae¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Arborvitae is an easily-recognized shrub, with its large teardrop shape and flattened branchlets held vertically (Fig. 1). Most young plants are seen as shrubs, but they can be pruned into a small tree by removing the lowest branches. This forms a distinctive vase shape and is common on older landscapes where the plant was located too close to a walk or home.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Platyclusus orientalis*

Pronunciation: plat-ih-KLAY-dus or-ee-en-TAY-liss

Common name(s): Arborvitae

Family: Cupressaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 10A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; specimen; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 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

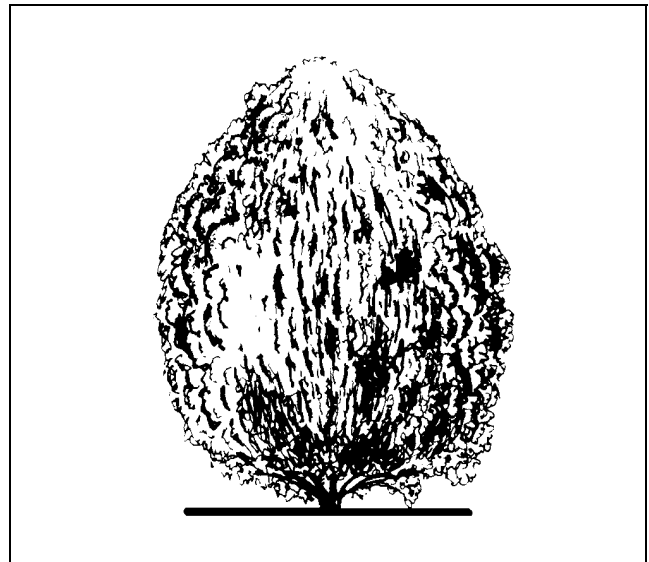


Figure 1. Mature Arborvitae.

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: deltoid; 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

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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.

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; 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

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Soil salt tolerance: poor

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

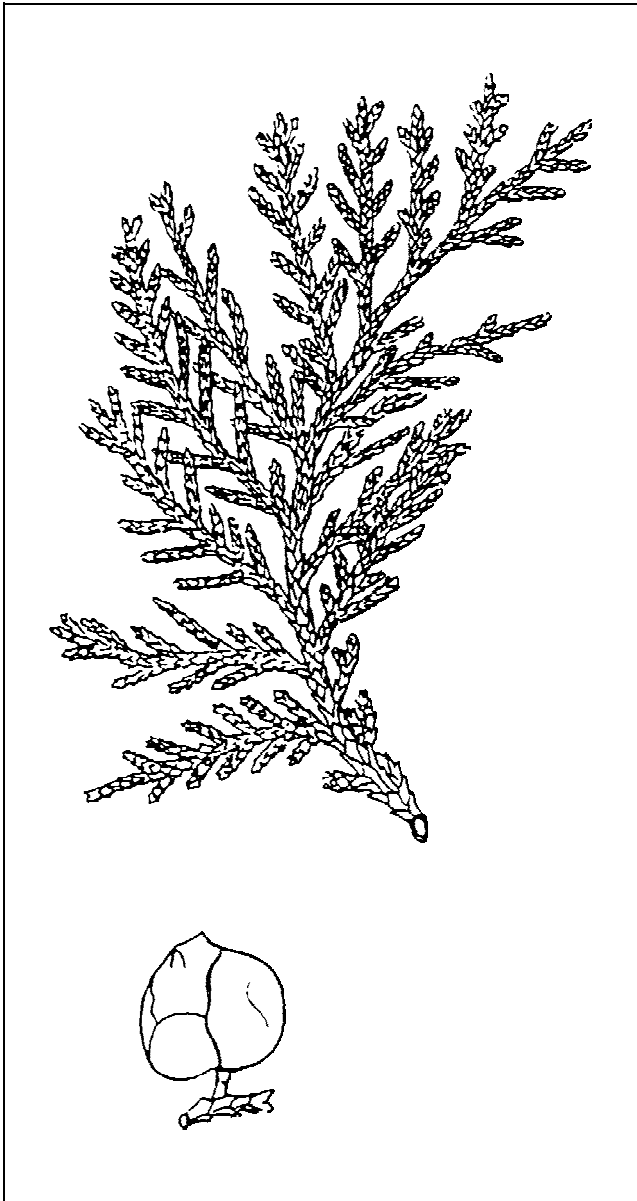


Figure 3. Foliage of Arborvitae.

Available cultivars include: 'Aureus', 3 to 5 feet tall, compact, golden leaves in spring, globe-shaped; 'Baker', height 7 to 9 feet, bright pale green foliage, hardy in hot, dry areas; 'Berckmanii', height 4 to 6 feet, compact and globe-shaped with golden-tipped branchlets; 'Bonita', cone-shaped, 3 feet tall, leaves with yellow tips; 'Globosa', globe-shaped dwarf; 'Juniperoides', 3 feet tall, juvenile foliage needle-like, purplish foliage in fall; 'Meldensis', 3 feet tall, narrow, purplish foliage in fall.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Pest problems include spider mites and bagworms. A fungus blight causes the interior twigs to turn brown. This blight can be controlled by fungicides in early fall and by pruning out and destroying affected areas. Locate the plant in a sunny area with good air circulation to keep the foliage as dry as possible.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Arborvitae does not tolerate pruning well since all foliage is toward the outside of the crown, but it is well-suited for use as a barrier, background, or specimen planting in a large landscape where it is properly located so pruning is not needed. Its distinctive appearance does not fit easily into natural or informal landscapes. It is often planted in cemeteries and referred to as Cemetery Plant.

Arborvitae grows moderately fast in full sun or very light shade and tolerates drought well once established. Sandy or loam soil is best, clay soil is only suited on a slope where drainage is good.