Thuja plicata ‘Canadian Gold’
‘Canadian Gold’ Giant Arborvitae

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INTRODUCTION

A native western North American tree, Giant-Cedar can reach 180 to 200 feet in height in some areas of the Northwest but is more often seen at 50 to 70 feet in height with a spread of 30 to 40 feet (Fig. 1). Forming a broad pyramidal silhouette with strongly horizontal branches, Giant-Cedar is an evergreen with fragrant, bright golden, delicate needles which generously clothe the branches, casting dense shade beneath the tree. The insignificant yellow flowers are followed by small, half-inch cones which seem a little out-of-place on such a large tree.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Thuja plicata ‘Canadian Gold’
Pronunciation: THOO-yuh ply-KAY-tuh
Common name(s): ‘Canadian Gold’ Giant Arborvitae, ‘Canadian Gold’ Giant-Cedar, ‘Canadian Gold’ Western Redcedar
Family: Cupressaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 8A (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: hedge; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 70 feet
Spread: 30 to 40 feet

Figure 1. Mature ‘Canadian Gold’ Giant Arborvitae.
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: columnar; pyramidal
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: unknown (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: ovate; scale-like
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen; fragrant
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: yellow
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: elongated
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; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; 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: brown; green
Current year twig thickness: thin

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Thuja plicata** ‘Canadian Gold’ -- ‘Canadian Gold’ Giant Arborvitae

**Wood specific gravity:** 0.32

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**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**

Tolerating shearing quite well, Giant-Cedar is ideal for use as a hedge or screen, or a specimen for a large landscape. The wood of this tree is commercially used in North America for the manufacture of roof shingles and siding and the split trunks were often used by Indians for making totem poles or canoes. Due to its narrow crown, it works well close to buildings where soil is frequently alkaline and drainage is poor.

Giant-Cedar naturally occurs on river banks, swamps, and even bogs so should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist, well-drained, fertile soil, and prefers a moist atmosphere. Apparently pH adaptable, growth is stunted on dry soils. Provide irrigation during the summer or locate in an area with moist soil and growth should be rapid.

A few of the other cultivars include: ‘Atrovirens’, excellent shining green foliage; and ‘Fastigiata’ (‘Hogan’), dense columnar silhouette, very resistant to bagworms - they do not appear to infest this cultivar as much as the species.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern but may be occasionally bothered by bagworm.