



Cryptomeria japonica 'Elegans' 'Elegans' Japanese-Cedar¹

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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

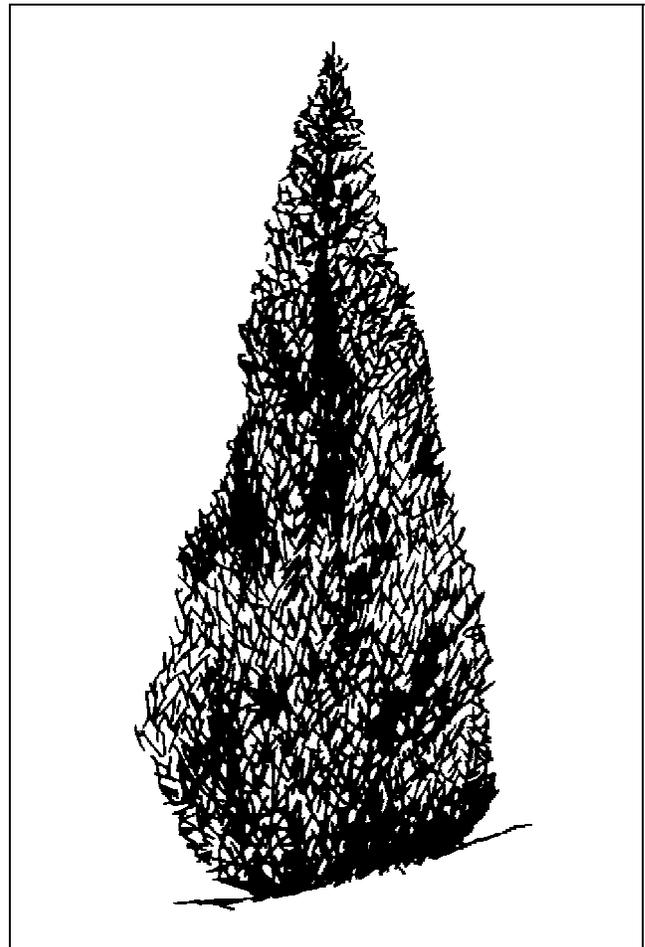


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Elegans' Japanese-Cedar.

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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

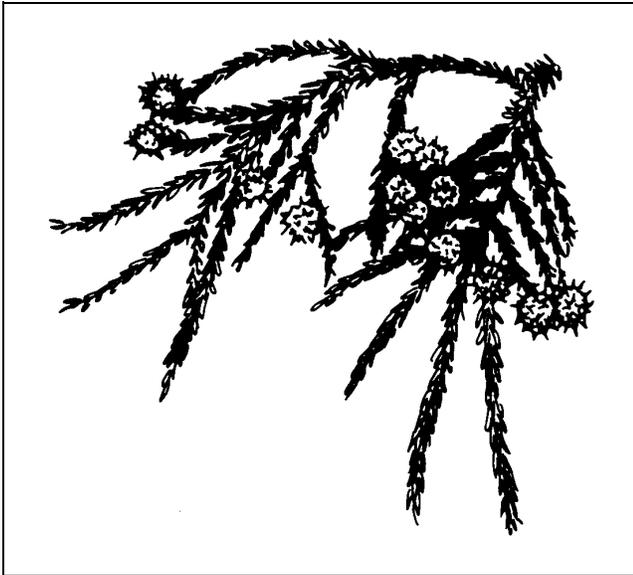


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Elegans' Japanese-Cedar.

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.