



Cryptomeria japonica Japanese-Cedar¹

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INTRODUCTION

The tree keeps a billowy pyramidal form on one central trunk until close to maturity when the crown opens up into an irregular, narrow oval (Fig. 1). It will reach a height of about 50 feet and spread about 20 feet. Old specimens can develop trunks to three feet in diameter. 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. Branches usually persist on the tree with old specimens branched to the ground.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Cryptomeria japonica*

Pronunciation: krip-toe-MEER-ee-uh
juh-PAWN-ih-kuh

Common name(s): Japanese-Cedar

Family: *Taxodiaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); specimen; residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

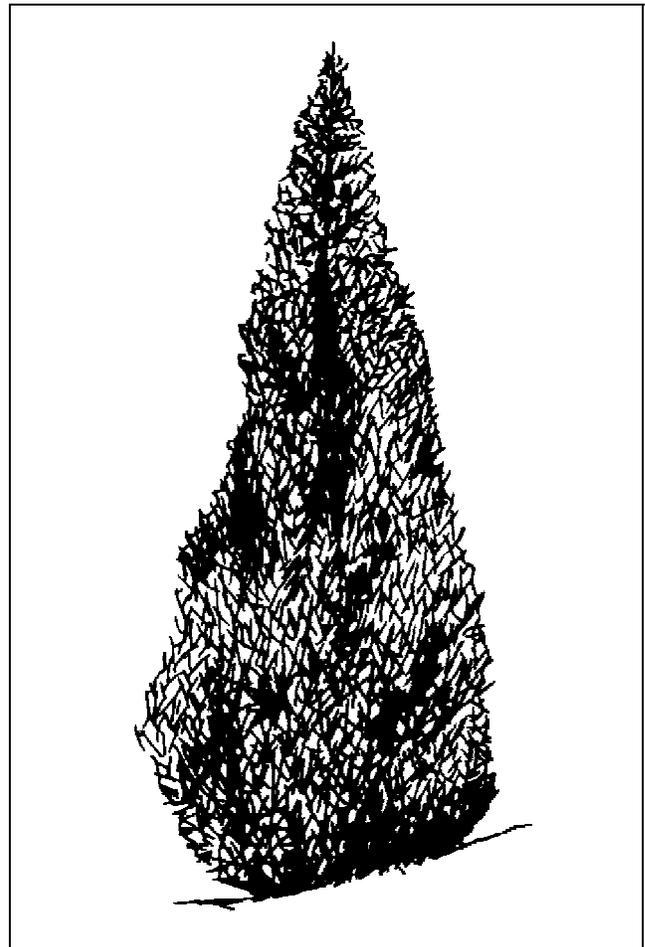


Figure 1. Middle-aged Japanese-Cedar.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 60 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 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

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: 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

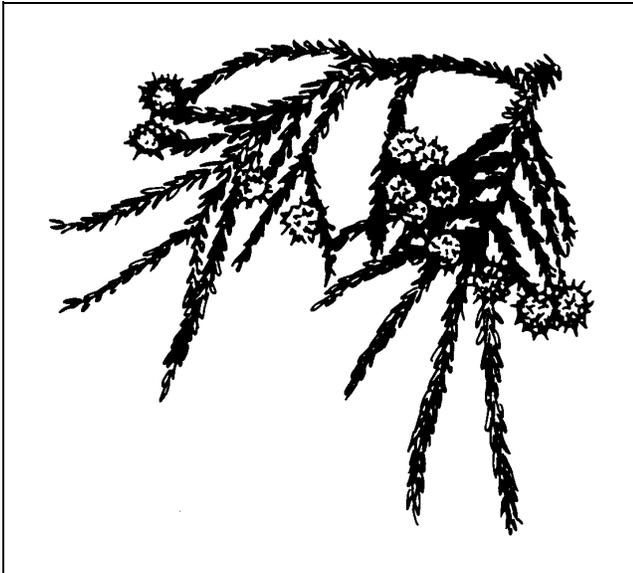


Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese-Cedar.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; 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: 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. Best with afternoon shade in southern part of its range. A number of 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 larger properties. It may grow too large for most residential landscapes. They can be planted as street trees 10 feet

back from the street in residential areas to provide an elegant flavor to the neighborhood.

Propagation is by cuttings which root slowly or by seed which germinates slowly.

‘Yoshino’ holds green foliage color in the winter. ‘Elegans’ grows to 15 feet tall.

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.