



Cupressus sempervirens Italian Cypress¹

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INTRODUCTION

With its narrow columnar habit of growth, this evergreen forms tall, dark green columns 40 to 60 feet in height in the western United States but are often much shorter (Fig. 1). Trees are normally no more than three feet wide. The scale-like leaves lend a very fine texture to any setting. Planted three feet apart, they make a dense screen. Italian Cypress is often used for framing, as a strong accent around large buildings, or in the formal landscape but does not lend itself well to many home landscapes. It quickly grows much too tall for most residential landscapes, looking much like a green telephone pole.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Cupressus sempervirens*
Pronunciation: koo-PRESS-us sem-per-VYE-renz
Common name(s): Italian Cypress
Family: *Cupressaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: screen
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 60 feet
Spread: 3 to 6 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: columnar

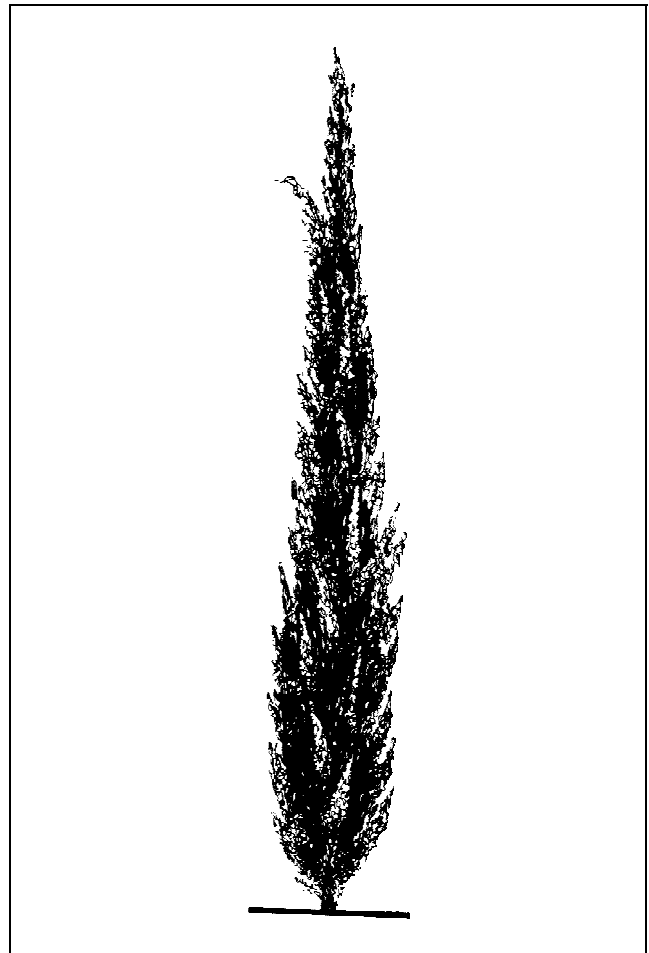


Figure 1. Middle-aged Italian Cypress.

Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** whorled
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** 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
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** oval
- 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:** grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; 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; gray
- 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
- Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate
- Soil salt tolerance:** good

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: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Growing in full sun on various well-drained soils, Italian Cypress should be planted in a well-prepared site and watered periodically until well-established. Italian Cypress should not be pruned. It is very susceptible to mites and trees are often infested.

Many cultivars are available; 'Glauca' has blue-green foliage and tight columnar form; 'Stricta' is very popular; 'Horizontalis' has horizontally-spreading branches.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Pests

Bagworms are occasionally a problem for Italian Cypress. Mites are often a problem.

Diseases

Root rot can be a problem for Italian Cypress in poorly-drained soil. Canker is a devastating disease that has killed many trees in California.