



x Cupressocyparis leylandii Leyland Cypress¹

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INTRODUCTION

A rapidly-growing evergreen when young, Leyland Cypress will easily grow three to four feet per year, even on poor soils, and will ultimately attain a majestic height of 50 feet or more in the west, perhaps somewhat shorter in the east (Fig. 1). Leyland Cypress forms a dense, oval or pyramidal outline when left unpruned, but the graceful, slightly pendulous branches will tolerate severe trimming to create a formal hedge, screen or windbreak. The fine, feathery foliage is composed of soft, pointed leaves on flattened branchlets and are dark blue-green when mature, soft green when young. Leyland Cypress quickly outgrows its space in small landscapes and is too big for most residential landscapes unless it will be regularly trimmed. Although it can be sheared into a tall screen on small lots, Leyland Cypress should probably be saved for large-scale landscapes where it can be allowed to develop into its natural shape.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *x Cupressocyparis leylandii*

Pronunciation: x koo-press-so-SIP-air-iss
lay-LAN-dee-eye

Common name(s): Leyland Cypress

Family: *Cupressaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: hedge; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; specimen; Christmas tree

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

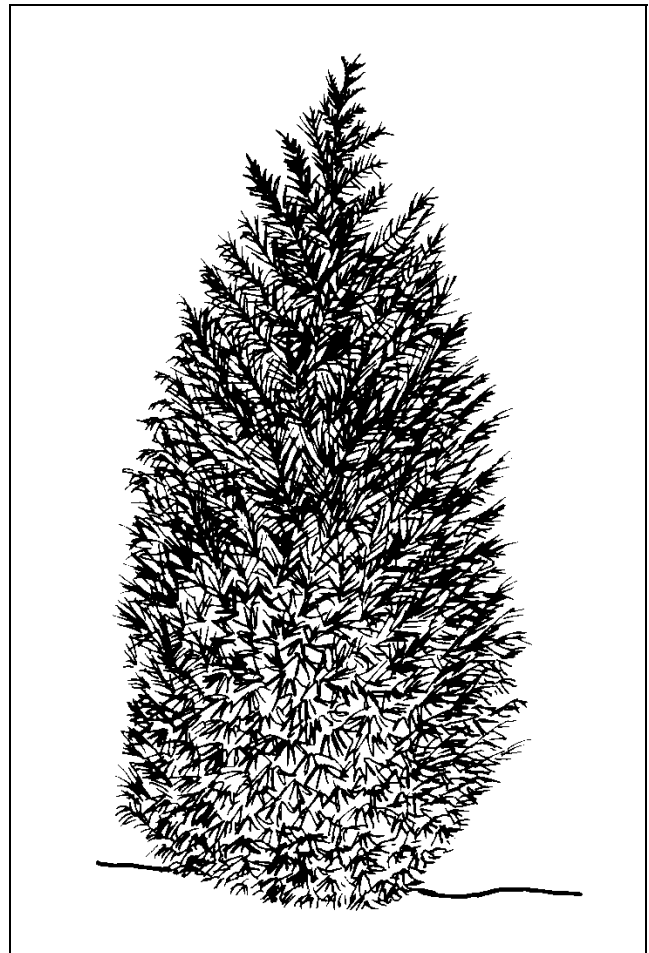


Figure 1. Middle-aged Leyland Cypress.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 50 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: columnar; oval; pyramidal
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
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: blue or blue-green; green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: no flowers
Flower characteristics: no flowers

Fruit

Fruit shape: 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: 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: 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; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

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

Diseases

A canker affects the tree following drought; a foliage fungus occasionally infects foliage. This plant is not recommended for planting in California due to the severity of this canker disease. Perhaps the disease will stay in the western United States.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Leyland Cypress grows in full sun on a wide range of soils, from acid to alkaline, but looks its best on moderately fertile soil with sufficient moisture. It is surprisingly tolerant of severe pruning, recovering nicely from even severe topping (although this is not recommended), even when half the top is removed. It grows well in clay soil and tolerates poor drainage for a short period of time. It also is very tolerant of salt spray.

Some available cultivars include: 'Castlewellan', a more compact form with gold-tipped leaves, excellent for hedges in cool climates; 'Leighton Green', dense branching with dark green foliage, columnar form; 'Haggerston Gray', loose branches, columnar-pyramidal, upturned at ends, sage-green color; 'Naylor's Blue', blue-grey foliage, columnar form; 'Silver Dust', wide-spreading form with blue-green foliage marked with white variegations.

Propagation is by cuttings from side growths.

Pests

Bagworm can defoliate a tree in a week or two, and can be quite serious.