Juniperus ashei
Ashe Juniper[1]

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INTRODUCTION

This multi-stemmed, native North American tree reaches 35 to 40 feet in height and has fragrant, resinous leaves (Fig. 1). Although the flowers are small and insignificant, the fruits which follow, ripen in August and September into a large, blue, berry-like cone which is relished by wildlife. The bark of Ashe Juniper peels off in long, thin strips, which are used by birds for nesting material. The wood of Ashe Juniper is strong enough to have been used for posts and poles.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Juniperus ashei*
Pronunciation: joo-NIP-er-us ASH-ee-eye
Common name(s): Ashe Juniper, Mountain-Cedar
Family: *Cupressaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9A (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: Bonsai; wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; screen; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree
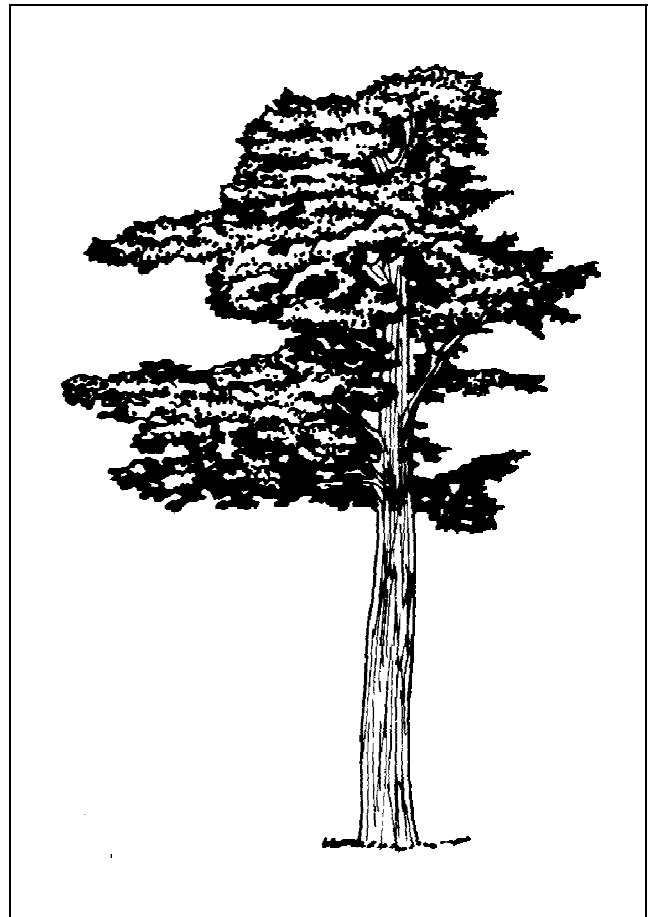

Figure 1. Mature Ashe Juniper.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 40 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: columnar; pyramidal

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown density: open
Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: terminal spine
Leaf shape: scale-like
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen; fragrant
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; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: blue
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant
litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will
not droop; showy trunk; 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; gray; reddish
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

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: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

It can be found growing with a single trunk or in clumps. It is probably best used in landscapes which are not irrigated since it is susceptible to Juniper blight. Many locations in the eastern part of the country are too humid to successfully grow this tree. It is most often found in the west and in the drier parts of Texas and Oklahoma.

Ashe Juniper should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil and easily tolerates alkaline soil.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

No pests are of major concern.

Diseases

Juniper blight can cause leaf discoloration and defoliation. Ashe Juniper is reportedly resistant to Cedarapple rust.