



Juniperus scopulorum Rocky Mountain Juniper¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Juniperus scopulorum is a native plant that can be found in the western United States (Fig. 1). In general, *Juniperus scopulorum* is a slow growing evergreen tree with a narrow, pyramidal habit that grows to a mature height of 30 to 40 feet. It is similar to other Junipers in that it requires a full sun exposure and will tolerate dry and droughty soils. *Juniperus scopulorum* is useful as a privacy screen or specimen. This Juniper is difficult to grow in the south due to disease problems. If you try it, provide excellent drainage and keep the foliage dry.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Juniperus scopulorum*

Pronunciation: joo-NIP-er-us skop-yoo-LOR-um

Common name(s): Rocky Mountain Juniper, Colorado Redcedar

Family: Cupressaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more

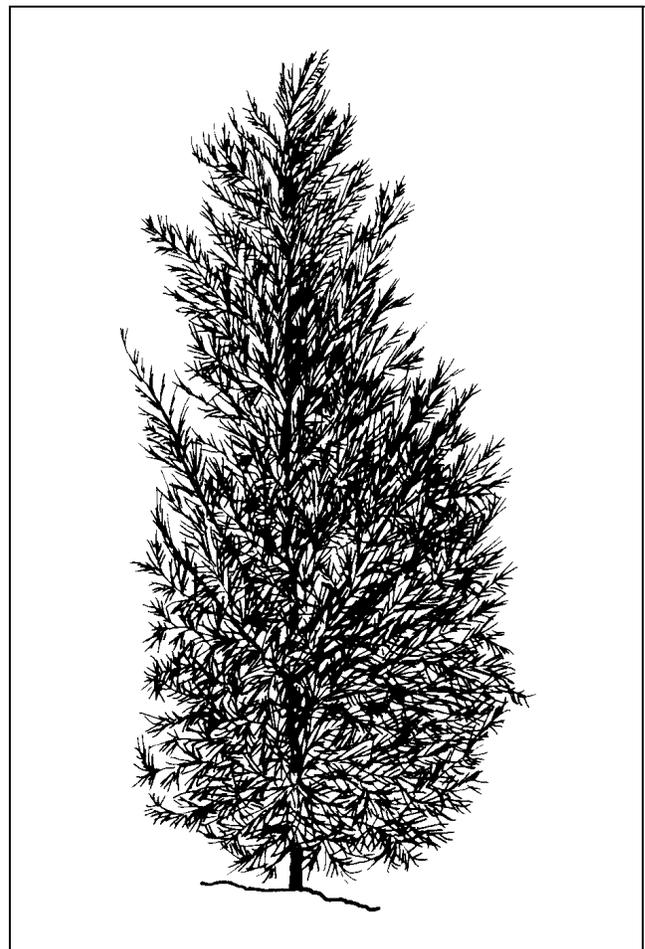


Figure 1. Young Rocky Mountain Juniper.

or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: columnar; pyramidal

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-324, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite; whorled

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire; 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: blue or blue-green; green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: 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: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; 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: 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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

There are many cultivars of this plant available to consumers due to the efforts of nursery operators. Only a small sample of their variability will be presented here. 'Gray Gleam' - silvery gray foliage, pyramidal, slow growing to 15 feet in 30 years; 'Skyrocket' - very narrow columnar growth, bluish green foliage. After the plant reaches about 15 feet tall (after about 10 to 15 years) it is subject to bending of the lateral branches, some to the ground, ruining its form. 'Table Top' - semi-upright, flat-topped growth habit, silvery gray foliage, five feet high in 10 years; 'Wichita Blue' - bright blue cast to foliage, pyramidal form.

Pests

Bagworm caterpillars web foliage and debris together to make bags up to two inches long. The insects live in the bags and emerge to feed on the foliage. Use sprays of *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The insects can also be picked off the plants by hand.

Juniper scale causes yellowed needles, and infected branches fail to produce new growth. The scale is round and at first white, later turning gray or black.

The Juniper webworm webs twigs and needles together, causing them to brown and die. The larva is 1/2-inch-long and is brown with darker stripes. The larvae are often in the densest part of the plant and can go unnoticed.

Mites cause stippled and bronzed foliage.

Diseases

Twig blight causes death and browning of twig tips. The disease may progress down the stem killing the whole branch. Small lesions may be seen at the base of dead tissue. Prune out dead branch tips.

Three rust diseases seen most often are cedar-apple rust, hawthorn rust, and quince rust. Cedar-apple is the most common. On Juniper the disease forms galls and orange jelly-like horns in spring. The horns are most likely to form following periods of rainy, warm weather. Spores formed in the horns infect the alternate host. The diseases are more serious on the alternate host than Juniper. A separation of a few hundred yards may help avoid the disease. Prune out the spore horns when seen in the spring.

Junipers are not tolerant of ice coatings. Expect dieback when Junipers are covered with ice for several days. Removing the ice is impractical.