



# *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera' Sawara Falsecypress<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Sawara Falsecypress grows slowly to about 30 feet in height and 20 feet wide at the base of the tree, and has thin, horizontal to pendulous branches of a very fine texture which forms a dense, broad pyramid (Fig. 1). The very attractive, reddish-brown, smooth, peeling bark is complemented nicely by the medium green foliage, but is usually not seen since lower branches are normally left on the tree and hide the trunk. This tree is quite popular in oriental and rock gardens, but can grow to be quite wide, so allow plenty of room for best form and development.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera'

**Pronunciation:** kam-eh-SIP-uh-riss pye-SIFF-er-uh

**Common name(s):** Sawara Falsecypress

**Family:** Cupressaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** Bonsai; specimen

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

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 25 to 35 feet

**Spread:** 20 to 30 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** pyramidal

**Crown density:** dense

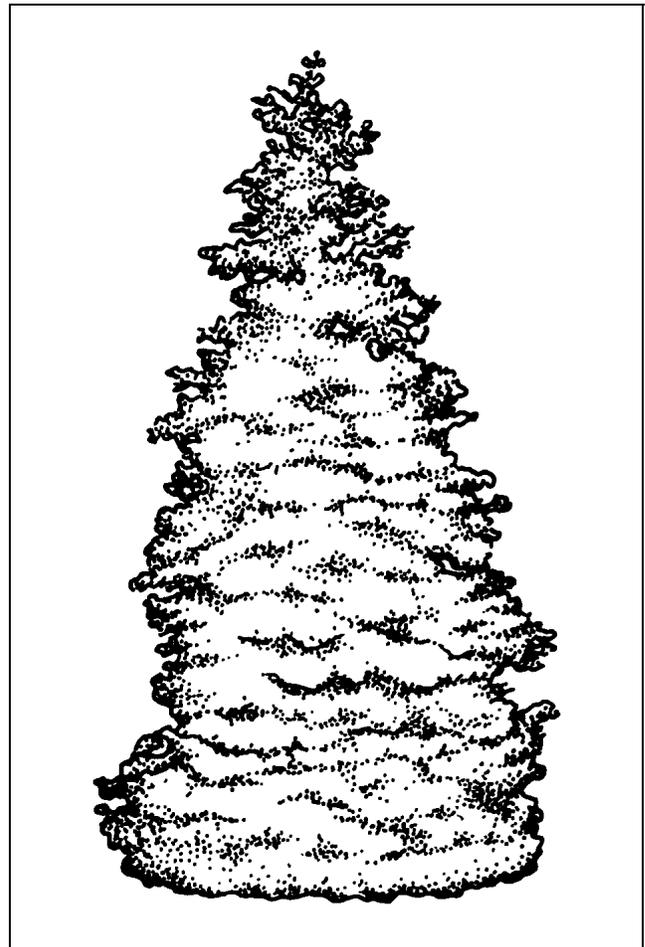


Figure 1. Middle-aged Sawara Falsecypress.

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-158, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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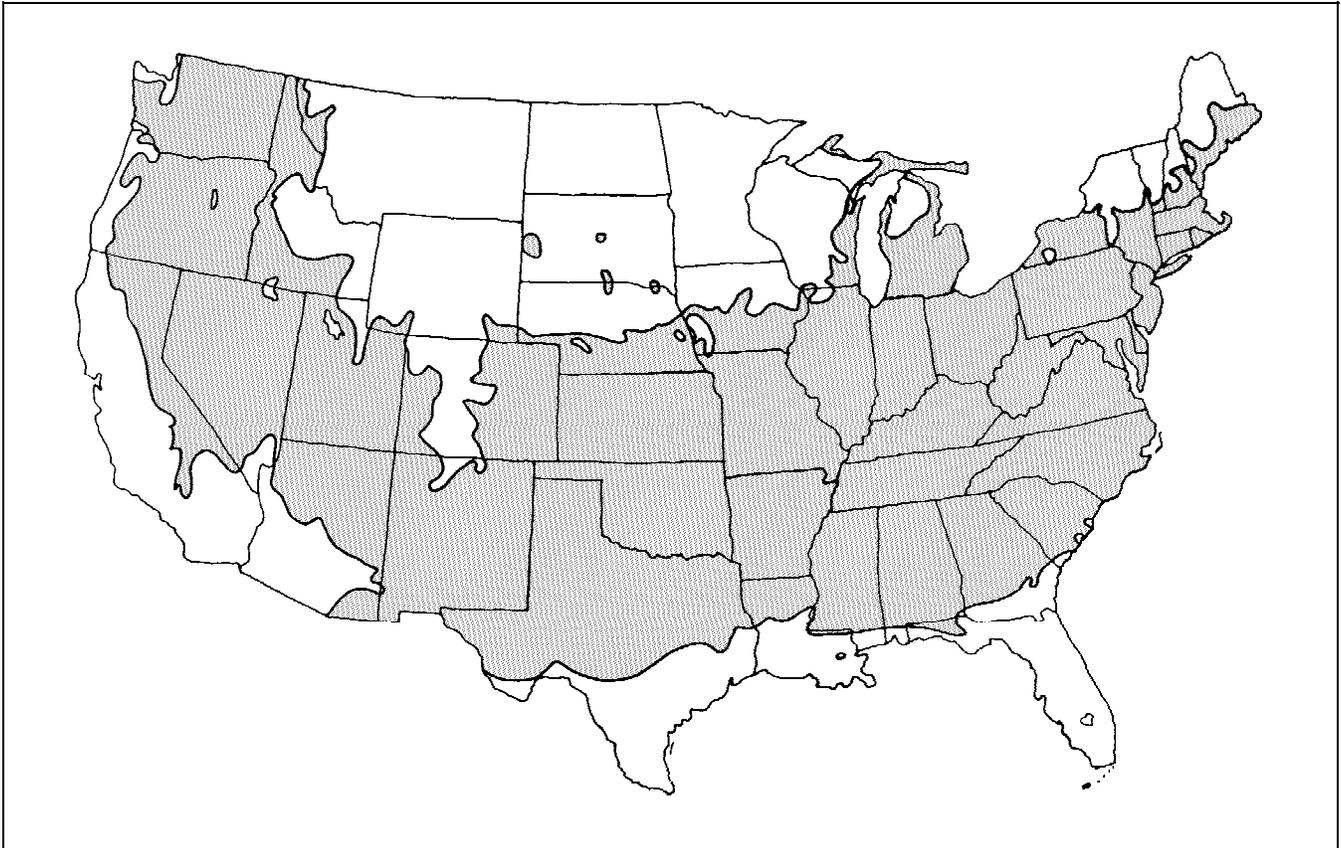


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

**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:** 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:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; 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:** brown; 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; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

**Soil salt tolerance:** poor

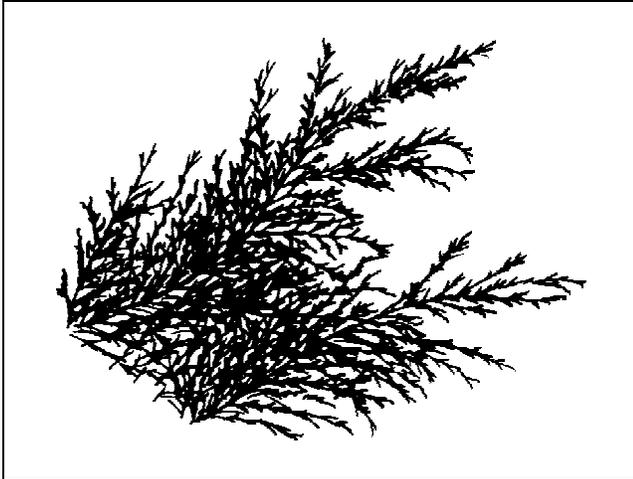


Figure 3. Foliage of Sawara Falsecypress.

### 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

It is best used as a specimen planting for a large, open area of a commercial or large residential landscape. Although it looks great in the nursery, it often grows too wide for a small residential lot.

Sawara Falsecypress should be grown in full sun to partial shade on moist, well-drained, non-alkaline soil in regions with moderate to high humidity. Although moderately drought tolerant, it is not especially happy in very hot summers unless provided with some irrigation. The plants transplant reasonably well when root pruned. It must be given full sun so lower branches remain on the tree to provide the best appearance. Plant looks sloppy if lower branches die or are removed, and this is not recommended. Locate the plant properly to eliminate the need for pruning.

Propagation is by cuttings.

### Pests

Usually no pests are of major concern, perhaps bagworm.

Juniper scale is best controlled by applying pesticides when the crawlers are active.

The bagworm webs dead foliage together to make a nest. The covering makes the insect difficult to control. Use sprays of *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The nests can be picked off by hand when infestations are small.

### Diseases

Usually no diseases are of major concern.

Phomopsis blight can be a problem on young plants in nurseries or old plants in landscape situations. In young plants, branch tips turn brown and die back until the whole branch or young tree is killed. Tip blight infects trees during wet weather. The disease causes sooty pustules on the leaves, bark and cones. Trees over five years old are less susceptible. When older trees in landscapes are affected, entire trees are seldom killed.

Scorch may look like a disease but is caused by excessive direct sun, freezing stress, drought or mites. Freezing stress can be prevented by shading small plants in winter.