

Cupressus glabra 'Carolina Safire' Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress¹

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INTRODUCTION

The species is a native of the American southwest, and is densely clothed in blue/grey leaves and becomes a narrow pyramid, perhaps reaching 50 to 70 feet tall (Fig. 1). Exceptionally tolerant of hot, dry conditions, Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress is ideal for use as a screen, hedge, or windbreak. The outer red/brown bark breaks off every year, revealing the fresh, new, bright red, smooth inner bark. Foliage of 'Carolina Safire' is one of the brightest blues you will ever see. Jump out of the way after planting this cultivar since it springs out of the ground, with young trees growing about six feet each year with irrigation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Cupressus glabra* 'Carolina Safire'
Pronunciation: koo-PRESS-us GLAY-bruh
Common name(s): Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress
Family: *Cupressaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: Bonsai; hedge; screen; specimen
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 70 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: oval; pyramidal

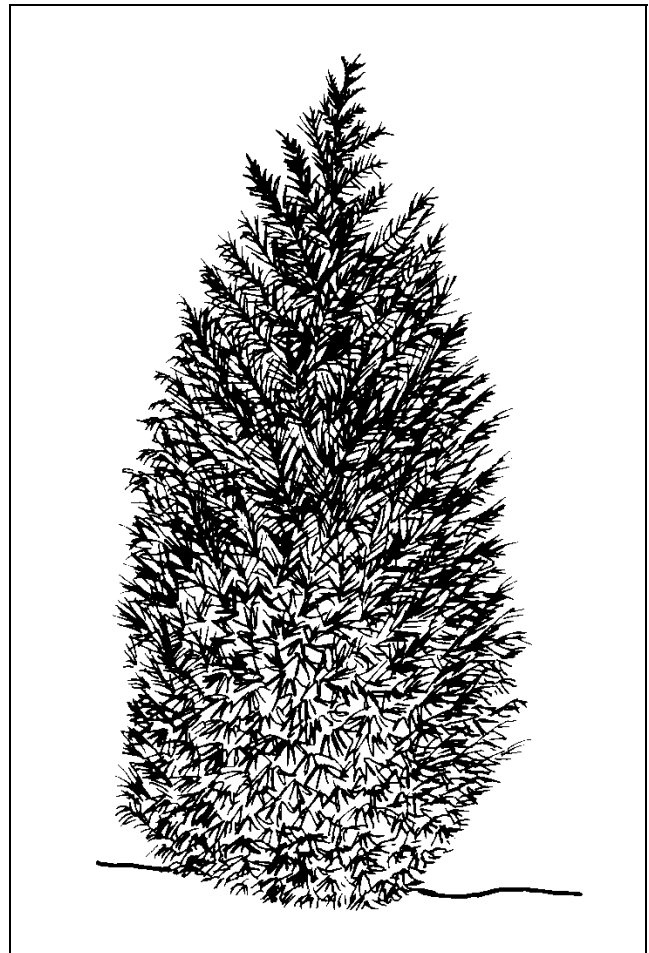


Figure 1. Young Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress.

Crown density: dense
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

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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: blue or blue-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: 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: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

Current year twig color: green

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

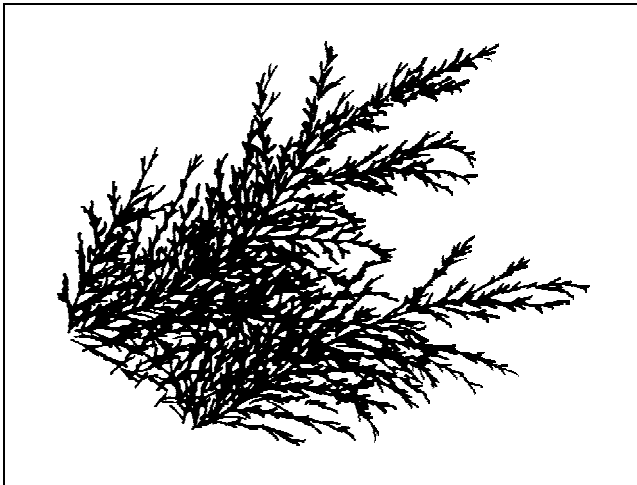


Figure 3. Foliage of Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress.

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

Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid or alkaline soil. If grown with too much moisture or on a poorly-drained clay, a shallow root system will develop making the tree susceptible to wind damage. The species was once widely grown in the southeastern U.S. but may perform best in the drier parts of the southwest, including west Texas and Oklahoma.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

No pests are of major concern.

Diseases

A stem canker has devastated large numbers of Smooth-Barked Arizona Cypress in various parts of the country.