



Juniperus deppeana 'Mcfetter' McFetter Alligator Juniper¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This native North American evergreen tree found in the southwestern United States reaches 50 to 60 feet in height and forms a broad, pyramidal or rounded canopy (Fig. 1). The crown probably spreads to about 20 or 25 feet. The trunk is normally rather short and covered with brown, scaly bark. The foliage has a rich blue coloration which stands out in the landscape against any background.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Juniperus deppeana* 'Mcfetter'

Pronunciation: joo-NIP-er-us depp-ee-AY-nuh

Common name(s): McFetter Alligator Juniper

Family: *Cupressaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

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

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 60 feet

Spread: 20 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

Crown density: dense

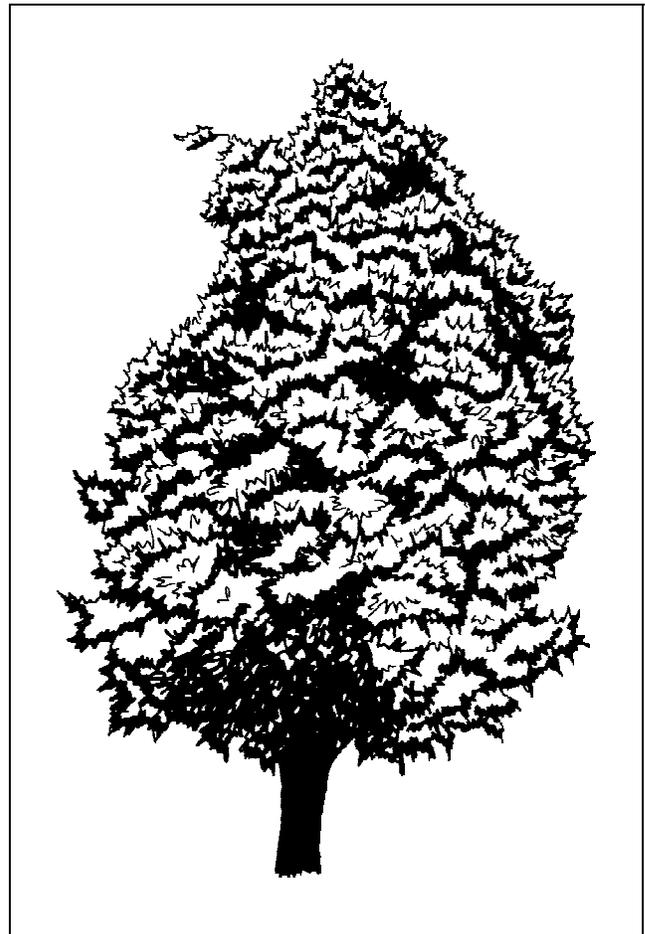


Figure 1. Mature McFetter Alligator Juniper.

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-323, 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
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- 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
- 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 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:** resistant
- Current year twig color:** brown; 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:** 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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Mcfetter Alligator Juniper can be used as Leyland Cypress has been. Plant it on 15 to 20 foot centers to form a solid blue screen. Growth rate is rapid in full sun.

Mcfetter Alligator Juniper is grown in full sun on well-drained, slightly acid soil. It appears to perform well on clay soils and should be suited for many areas of the southern United States.

Pests

No pests are of major concern at this time. However, the plant has not been grown in the east for very long.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern at this time.