



# *Thuja plicata* Giant Arborvitae<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

A native western North American tree, Giant-Cedar can reach 180 to 200 feet in height in some areas of the Northwest but is more often seen at 50 to 70 feet in height with a spread of 15 to 25 feet (Fig. 1). Forming an upright pyramidal silhouette with strongly horizontal branches, Giant-Cedar is an evergreen with fragrant, dark green, delicate needles which generously clothe the branches, casting dense shade beneath the tree. The insignificant yellow flowers are followed by small, half-inch cones which seem a little out-of-place on such a large tree.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Thuja plicata*

**Pronunciation:** THOO-yuh ply-KAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Giant Arborvitae, Giant-Cedar, Western Redcedar

**Family:** *Cupressaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 8A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** hedge; 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:** 50 to 70 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet

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

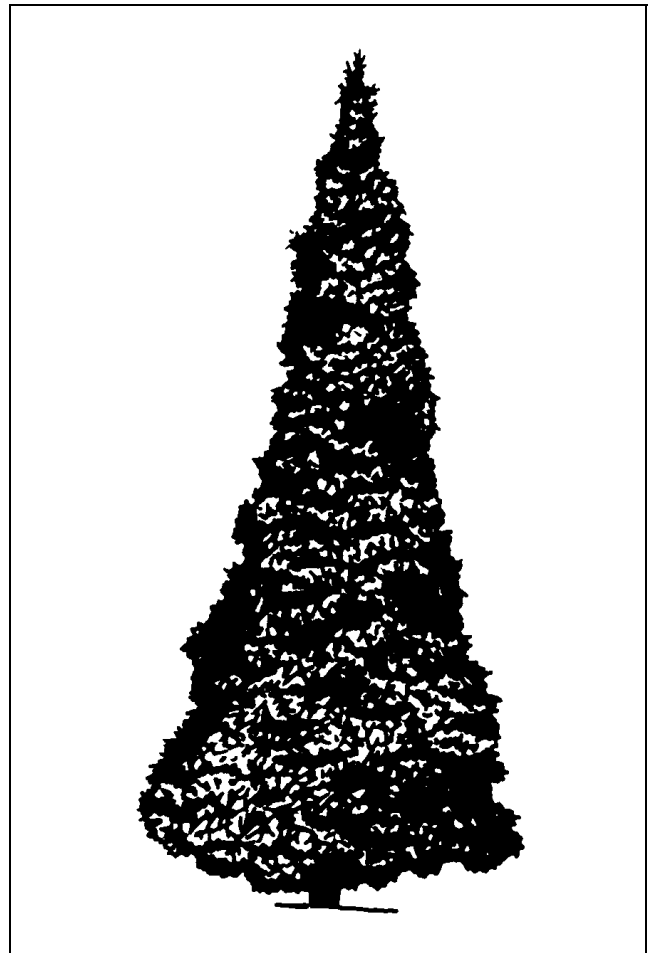


Figure 1. Mature Giant Arborvitae.

or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** columnar; pyramidal

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** medium

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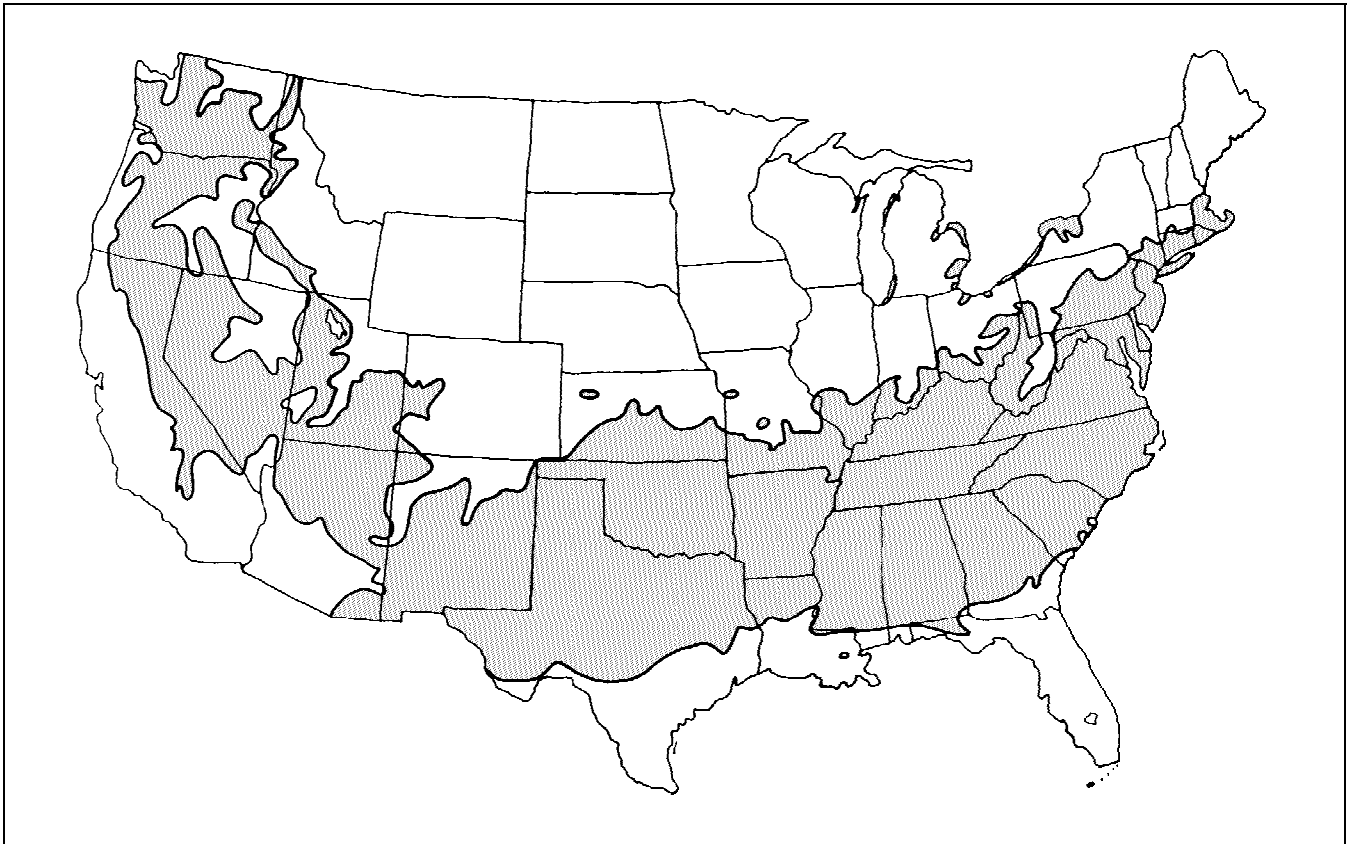


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Texture:** fine

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** unknown (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** ovate; 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 color:** yellow

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** grow mostly upright and will not droop; should be grown with a single leader; very showy trunk; 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

**Wood specific gravity:** 0.32



Figure 3. Foliage of Giant Arborvitae.

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun;

tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic;

occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

### 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

Tolerating shearing quite well, Giant-Cedar is ideal for use as a hedge or screen, or a specimen for a large landscape. The wood of this tree is commercially used in North America for the manufacture of roof shingles, deck boards, and siding and the split trunks were often used by Indians for making totem poles or canoes. Due to its narrow crown, it works well close to buildings where soil is frequently alkaline and drainage is poor.

Giant-Cedar naturally occurs on river banks, swamps, and even bogs so should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist, well-drained, fertile soil, and prefers a moist atmosphere. Apparently pH adaptable,

growth is stunted on dry soils. Provide irrigation during the summer or locate in an area with moist soil.

A few of the many cultivars include: 'Arovirens', excellent shining green foliage; 'Canadian Gold', golden foliage; and 'Fastigiata' ('Hogan'), dense columnar silhouette, very resistant to bagworms - they do not appear to infest this cultivar as much as the species.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern but may be occasionally bothered by bagworm.