



BALDCYPRESS

Taxodium distichum

Native Range

Baldcypress is native to swampy (fresh-water) areas throughout the southeastern United States. It's not native to Kansas.

Mature Size

This is a large tree reaching a mature height of 60 to 100 feet with variable crown spread.

Growth Rate

Where soil moisture is abundant, this tree may grow as much as 18 inches per year.

Leaves, Stems and fruit

The needle-like leaves are ½ to ¾ inch long, light green in summer and coppery bronze in fall. They are arranged in two ranks in a feather-like fashion on slender twigs. Unlike most conifers, this one drops its leaves in the fall. Stems are light green initially becoming reddish brown and rough surfaced by the end of the first season. By the second or third season, the bark develops a cinnamon brown color. The fruit is a ¾ to 1 inch cone which usually disintegrates at maturity. Seeds are irregular in shape. An unusual characteristic of this tree is that the roots, in swampy areas, form woody structures called "knees" which stick up around the tree. Their height is thought to be related to soil moisture. Knees normally don't form in Kansas except on wetter sites.

Use

Forest Riparian Buffers

Its high flood tolerance, extensive root system, moderate shade tolerance and long life, makes baldcypress a good candidate for use in forest riparian buffers.

Wildlife

This tree provides resting and nesting cover for many species of wildlife.

Adaptation

Eastern third of Kansas.

Soil

Baldcypress grows best on moist, fertile, well-drained soils, but does well on most soils with good moisture. It tolerates seasonal droughts often losing its foliage which does no long term damage to the tree. As long as adequate moisture is available, it responds well to fertilizer.

Spacing

Space baldcypress 8 to 18 feet within rows and 12 to 18 feet between rows.

Culture

One-year-old, bare-root seedlings (14 to 18 inches tall) are used in conservation plantings. During the establishment period, supplemental watering and control of competing vegetation will aid survival and early growth.

Pests

Rabbits favor young baldcypress. Protective measures may be required to get this plant established.