



EASTERN REDCEDAR

Juniperus virginiana

Native Range

Eastern redcedar is a juniper rather than a true cedar. As Kansas' only native evergreen tree, it grows throughout the state.

Mature Size

Redcedar grows to a height of about 30 to 35 feet and the branches may spread 12 to 15 feet.

Growth Rate

It grows from 1 to 1 ½ feet per year.

Leaves, Stems and Fruit

Redcedar's leaves are small and scale-like, dark green in summer changing to reddish-brown in fall. Male and female flowers are inconspicuous and develop on separate trees in April. Blue, berry-like fruit ripens in September. The one-quarter inch fruit is borne, only on female plants and persists through the winter. The fruit is a favorite of numerous birds and other animals which accounts for its spread to areas where it is not wanted.

Use

Windbreaks

Because of the dense, compact, long-lived foliage and low branches, redcedar makes excellent windbreaks and living snow fences. It serves well as the evergreen component of a multiple row windbreak and because of its density is effective as a single row windbreak.

Wildlife Habitat

Many species of birds and other animals feed on redcedar fruit. The dense foliage provides year round cover for many species of wildlife. Persisting fruit and dense foliage are especially valuable as emergency food and cover during severe winter storms.

Products

Because of the durability of the heartwood, redcedar makes excellent posts. The dark red heartwood and white sapwood is very desirable for novelty items and chests. Berries provide the primary flavoring in gin.

Adaptation

Statewide.

Soil

Redcedar grows best in well-drained soils that are at least 24 inches deep. It may survive in very shallow, tight dry soils, but growth is slow. It is moderately tolerant of alkaline soils.

Spacing

Redcedars are spaced 6 to 10 feet apart within row and 6 to 18 feet apart between rows in multiple row plantings.

Culture

Natural stands often are indicative of shallow, poor soils. It tends to spread to uncultivated areas. Its long life and dense, pyramidal form with persistent foliage makes it a desirable conservation plant. It is more shade-tolerant than the pines and can be planted in partial shade.

Two-year-old, bare-root and container grown seedlings are generally used in plantings. Both bare-root and container grown seedlings are 8 to 12 inches tall. Unlike the pines, redcedar will grow 12 to 18 inches the first year with adequate water and freedom of competing weeds and grass.

Pests

Redcedar is an alternate host for cedar-apple rust which is a serious disease of apples, but does little damage to redcedar. Other common diseases include Kabatina and Cercospera blight. bagworms, borers and spider mites are common pests.