



ROCKY MOUNTAIN JUNIPER

Juniperus scopulorum

Native Range

Rocky Mountain juniper is native to Rocky Mountains and the northwestern Great Plains. It is not native in Kansas.

Mature Size

Height of 20 to 30 feet and spread 8 to 12 feet.

Growth Rate

Slow growing at 1 foot per year.

Leaves, Stems and Fruit

Rocky Mountain juniper is often confused with redcedar. The leaves and fruit are similar to those of redcedar. The main differences are (1) juniper is smaller with a height of 20 to 30 feet and spread 8 to 12 feet, (2) juniper's branches tend to be more upright and shed snow more easily (less snow breakage), (3) juniper holds its summer color throughout the year, (4) juniper is generally slower growing (1 foot per year), (5) juniper is less tolerant of shade, and (6) juniper is more susceptible to disease.

Use

Windbreaks

This is an excellent windbreak species which is often planted in place of eastern redcedar. Use in both multiple and single row windbreaks.

Wildlife Habitat

The fruit is eaten by many species of birds and other animals. The branches form a dense cover that is popular with numerous wildlife species. The persistent fruit and dense foliage are especially valuable as emergency food and cover in severe winter storms.

Adaptation

Due to susceptibility to diseases, this plant should be restricted to the dryer western eighth of the state.

Soil

Rocky Mountain juniper 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

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

Culture

Bare-root seedlings (6 to 12 inches tall) are used in planting Rocky Mountain juniper. During the establishment period, control of competing weeds and grass will aid survival and early growth.

Pests

It is quite susceptible to Cercospera blight and Bot canker in humid areas. Rocky Mountain juniper is an alternate host for cedar-apple rust, but it is much less susceptible than redcedar. The rust does little damage to juniper. Another common disease is Kabatina. Bagworms and spider mite are common insect pests.