Bald Cypress

Taxodium distichum

Height: 70 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Description:

An interesting tall, pyramidal deciduous conifer characteristic of the South but actually quite hardy; narrow bright green leaves turn golden brown in fall, a broad trunk and odd knee-like protrusions at the base when grown in standing water.

Ornamental Features

Bald Cypress is primarily valued in the landscape for its distinctively pyramidal habit of growth. It has emerald green deciduous foliage. The ferny bipinnately compound leaves turn an outstanding orange in the fall. However, the fruit can be messy in the landscape and may require occasional clean-up. The shaggy antique red bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Bald Cypress is a deciduous tree with a strong central leader and a distinctive and refined pyramidal form. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which can make it a great accent feature on this basis alone.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds and squirrels to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Bald Cypress is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade



Bald Cypress
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Bald Cypress in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Bald Cypress will grow to be about 70 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a high canopy of foliage that sits well above the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. This plant should be periodically fertilized throughout the active growing season with a specially-formulated acidic fertilizer. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.

Clean up Rating (1-5) 1=least effort 5=most effort

Clean Up Rating (2) Flowers are insignificant. Few to some clusters of 2" round cones appear in summer when the tree gets 8 to 10 years or older and drops in early autumn. Birds and wildlife enjoy eating the cones or they are small enough to mow or can be picked up. The foliage can blow away in the wind or can be mowed or bagged.



Bald Cypress foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder