

# *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*: Lawson Falsecypress<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Often seen at 40 to 60 feet tall by 15 feet wide in its cultivated form, this North American native can soar to heights of 100 to 150 feet in the wild. The massive, thick trunk and formal, upright, conical silhouette is softened by the gently weeping tips of the short, upright branches. The flattened, dark blue-green branchlets have a delicate, almost fern-like appearance, which are nicely complemented by the rough, deeply furrowed, reddish-brown bark. Available in a wide variety of forms and bluish foliage colors, Lawson Falsecypress still remains today an important timber trees from the Pacific Northwest. But it is rare in the nursery trade and probably not well adapted to most landscapes.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*

**Pronunciation:** kam-eh-SIP-uh-riss law-so-nee-AY-nuh

**Common name(s):** Lawson Falsecypress, Port-Orford-Cedar

**Family:** Cupressaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5B through 7B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Uses:** specimen; screen; Bonsai

**Availability:** not native to North America

## Description

**Height:** 40 to 60 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical

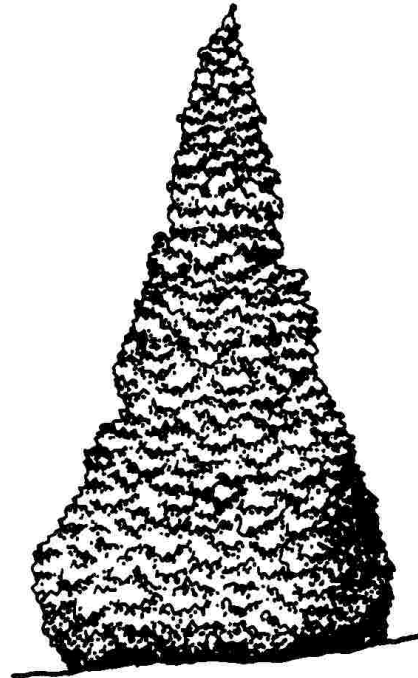


Figure 1. Mature *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*: Lawson Falsecypress

**Crown shape:** upright/erect, columnar, pyramidal

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

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Figure 2. Range

**Leaf shape:** scale-like

**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** blue or blue-green, green

**Fall color:** no color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** red, blue

**Flower characteristics:** not showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round, cone

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** little required

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** green, brown

**Current year twig thickness:** thin

**Wood specific gravity:** 0.43

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem

**Winter interest:** no

**Outstanding tree:** yes

**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant

**Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

## Use and Management

Lawson Falsecypress is only suited for the largest landscapes such as in parks, golf courses, large industrial or commercial landscapes or estates. The unusually blue foliage and dense, symmetrical growth habit make it ideally suited as a screen in a sunny spot protected from constant wind. It has somewhat picky cultural requirements and should be grown in full sun in moist, well-drained soil (not clay), in areas of moderate to high humidity, and preferably where the trees can be protected from harsh winds. These sites may be hard to find in the East.

Various cultivars are available with different foliage colors (golden, blue, or silver-variegated) and different growth forms (dwarf, columnar, and low-spreading).

Propagation is done easily by cuttings taken in fall, or by seeds, with difficulty.

## Pests

No pests are of major concern.

## Diseases

A fungus damages this species by causing root-rot which eventually kills the tree. Plant only in the most well-drained soil.

There is also a branch canker which can cause branch dieback.