

Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Filifera': Sawara Falsecypress¹

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Introduction

Sawara Falsecypress grows slowly to about 30 feet in height and 20 feet wide at the base of the tree, and has thin, horizontal to pendulous branches of a very fine texture which forms a dense, broad pyramid. The very attractive, reddish-brown, smooth, peeling bark is complemented nicely by the medium green foliage, but is usually not seen since lower branches are normally left on the tree and hide the trunk. This tree is quite popular in oriental and rock gardens, but can grow to be quite wide, so allow plenty of room for best form and development.

General Information

Scientific name: *Chamaecyparis pisifera*

Pronunciation: kam-eh-SIP-uh-riss pye-SIFF-er-uh

Common name(s): Sawara Falsecypress

Family: *Cupressaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5A through 8A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera': Sawara Falsecypress

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Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Leaf margin: entire

Uses: specimen; Bonsai

Leaf shape: scale-like

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 25 to 35 feet

Spread: 20 to 30 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: pyramidal

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: unknown

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 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: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

It is best used as a specimen planting for a large, open area of a commercial or large residential landscape. Although it looks great in the nursery, it often grows too wide for a small residential lot.

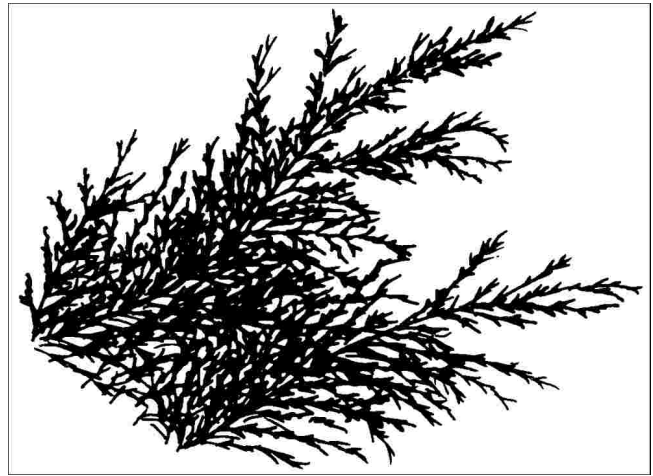


Figure 3. Foliage

Sawara Falsecypress should be grown in full sun to partial shade on moist, well-drained, non-alkaline soil in regions with moderate to high humidity. Although moderately drought tolerant, it is not especially happy in very hot summers unless provided with some irrigation. The plants transplant reasonably well when root pruned. It must be given full sun so lower branches remain on the tree to provide the best appearance. Plant looks sloppy if lower branches die or are removed, and this is not recommended. Locate the plant properly to eliminate the need for pruning.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

Usually no pests are of major concern, perhaps bagworm.

Juniper scale is best controlled by applying pesticides when the crawlers are active.

The bagworm webs dead foliage together to make a nest. The covering makes the insect difficult to control. Use sprays of *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The nests can be picked off by hand when infestations are small.

Diseases

Usually no diseases are of major concern.

Phomopsis blight can be a problem on young plants in nurseries or old plants in landscape situations. In young plants, branch tips turn brown

and die back until the whole branch or young tree is killed. Tip blight infects trees during wet weather. The disease causes sooty pustules on the leaves, bark and cones. Trees over five years old are less susceptible. When older trees in landscapes are affected, entire trees are seldom killed.

Scorch may look like a disease but is caused by excessive direct sun, freezing stress, drought or mites. Freezing stress can be prevented by shading small plants in winter.