Introduction

With its narrow columnar habit of growth, this evergreen forms tall, dark green columns 25 to 40 feet in height but are often shorter in the east. ‘Glauca’ has blue-green foliage and tight columnar form. Trees are normally no more than 3 feet wide. The scale-like leaves lend a very fine texture to any setting. Planted three feet apart, they make a dense screen. Italian cypress is often used for framing, as a strong accent around large buildings, or in the formal landscape but does not lend itself well to many home landscapes. It quickly grows much too tall for most residential landscapes, looking much like a green telephone pole.

General Information

Scientific name: *Cupressus sempervirens*

Pronunciation: koo-PRESS-us sem-per-VYE-renz

Common name(s): ‘Glauca’ Italian cypress

Family: *Cupressaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: screen

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

Description

Height: 25 to 40 feet

Spread: 3 to 6 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: columnar

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: moderate
Cupressus sempervirens 'Glauca': 'Glauca' Italian Cypress

Texture: fine

Figure 2. Range

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: whorled
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
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: green, blue or blue-green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: unknown
Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit
Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 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; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown, gray
Current year twig thickness: thin
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture
Light requirement: full sun
Soil tolerances: sand; loam; clay; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other
Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: no
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

Use and Management
Growing in full sun on various well-drained soils, Italian cypress should be planted in a well-prepared site and watered periodically until well-established. Italian cypress should not be pruned. It is very susceptible to mites and trees are often infested.

Many cultivars are available: 'Stricta'—very popular; 'Horizontalis'—horizontally-spreading branches.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Pests
Bagworms are occasionally a problem for Italian cypress. Mites are often a problem.

Diseases
Root rot can be a problem for Italian cypress in poorly-drained soil. Canker has killed many trees in California.