

Cedrus atlantica 'Argentea': Silver Atlas Cedar¹

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Introduction

This silver-blue foliated cultivar is a handsome evergreen for specimen planting. It reaches 40 to 60 or more feet tall and 30 to 40 feet wide. The trunk stays fairly straight with lateral branches nearly horizontal. Allow plenty of room for these to spread. They are best located as a lawn specimen away from walks, streets, and sidewalks so branches will not have to be pruned and are left on the tree to the ground. This shows off the wonderful pyramidal form with lower branches spreading about half the height. It looks odd if lower branches are removed. The trees are much too large for most residential properties. Older trees become flat-topped and are a beautiful sight to behold.

General Information

Scientific name: *Cedrus atlantica*

Pronunciation: SEE-drus at-LAN-tih-kuh

Common name(s): Silver atlas cedar

Family: *Pinaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6A through 8B (Figure 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not assessed/incomplete assessment

Uses: specimen; bonsai

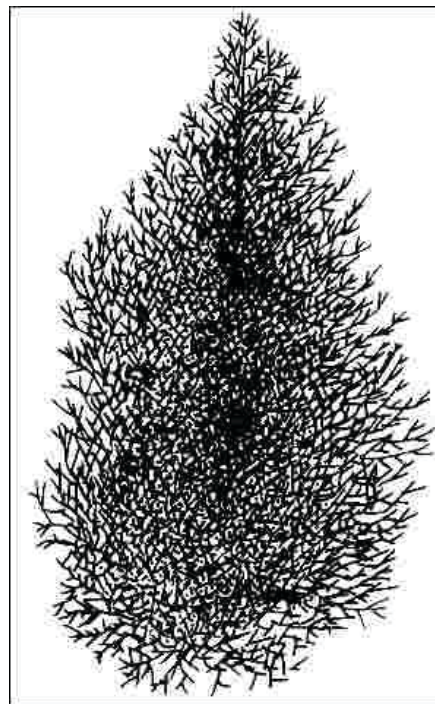


Figure 1. Young *Cedrus atlantica* 'Argentea': Silver atlas cedar.

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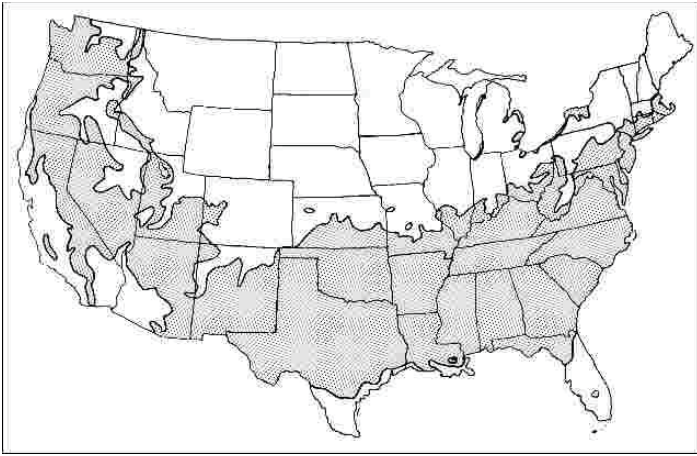


Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 40 to 60 feet

Spread: 35 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: pyramidal

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Figure 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: needle-like (filiform)

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: needled evergreen, evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: silver

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

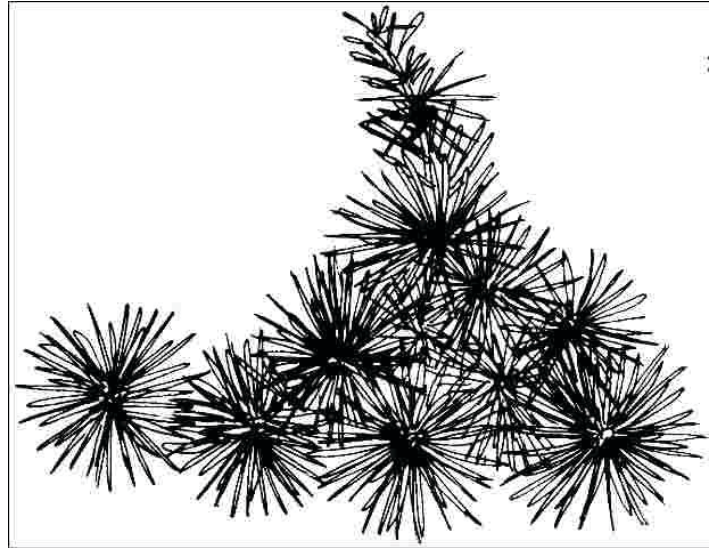


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: unknown

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, cone

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

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

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green, brown

Current year twig thickness: medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun, or partial shade

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

Difficult to transplant, it should be moved as a container plant or root-pruned balled-in-burlap. It does best in well-drained deep loam, on the acidic side, but it can tolerate sandy or clay soils, if they are well-drained. The tree looks its best when it is sheltered from strong winds, but it tolerates open conditions and will grow in full sun or partial shade. Allow for plenty of soil space around the tree since growth will be poor in restricted soil space. It tolerates extensive drought only when grown in an area where roots can explore a large soil area. It performs well in all areas within its hardiness range. It is suitable in zone 9 in California and perhaps in Florida.

Cultivars

Two other especially desirable cultivars are *Cedrus atlantica* 'Pendula', a weeping form, and *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca', having beautiful bluish-white foliage.

Pests

Generally free of insect pests and resistant to diseases, they may occasionally fall prey to tip blight, root rots or black scale and the Deodar weevil. Usually, no pest protection or control is necessary.

Sap-suckers are attracted to the trunk and often riddle it with small holes. This usually does little lasting harm to the tree.