

# *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera': Sawara Falsecypress<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Sawara falsecypress grows slowly to about 30 feet high and 20 feet wide at the base of the tree, and has thin, horizontal to pendulous branches of a very fine texture that form 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.



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

Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

## 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:** 4B through 8B (Figure 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** not assessed/incomplete assessment

**Uses:** specimen; bonsai

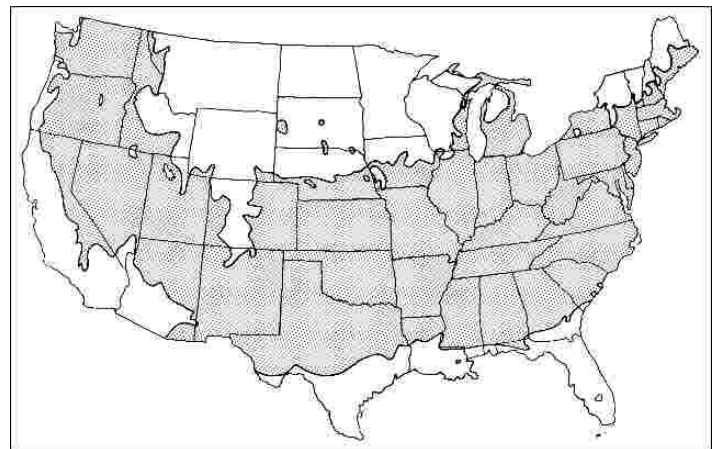


Figure 2. Range

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus, Department of Environmental Horticulture; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; Ryan W. Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture, Department of Environmental Horticulture; and Deborah R. Hilbert, UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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## 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 (Figure 3)

**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

**Fall color:** no color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

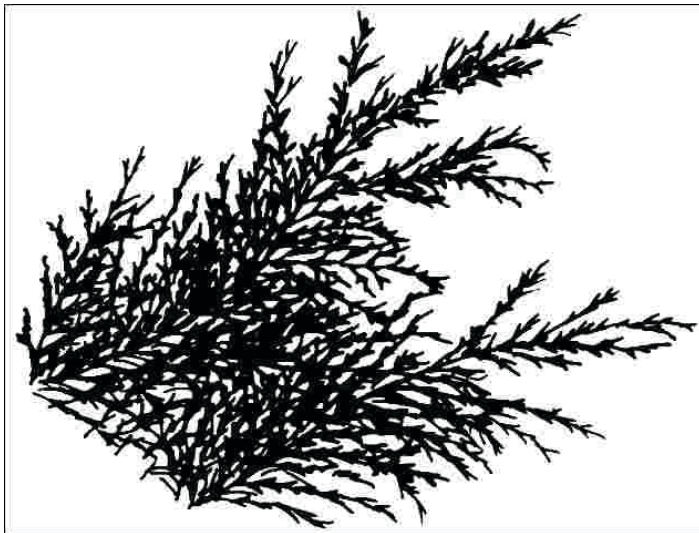


Figure 3. Foliage

## Flower

**Flower color:** unknown

**Flower characteristics:** not showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round, cone

**Fruit length:** less than 0.5 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.

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 there are no pests 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 there are no diseases 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.