

# *Hesperocyparis glabra* 'Carolina Sapphire': Smooth Barked Arizona Cypress<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The species is a native of the American southwest and is densely clothed in blue/grey leaves and becomes a narrow pyramid, perhaps reaching 50 to 70 feet tall. Exceptionally tolerant of hot, dry conditions, smooth barked Arizona cypress is ideal for use as a screen, hedge, or windbreak. The outer red/brown bark breaks off every year, revealing the fresh, new, bright red, smooth inner bark. Foliage of 'Carolina Sapphire' is one of the brightest blues you will ever see. Jump out of the way after planting this cultivar since it springs out of the ground, with young trees growing about 6 feet each year with irrigation.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Hesperocyparis glabra*

**Pronunciation:** hes-per-oh-SY-pair-iss GLAY-bruh

**Common name(s):** Smooth barked Arizona cypress

**Family:** Cupressaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 7A through 9B (Figure 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

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

**Uses:** screen; hedge; specimen; bonsai



Figure 1. Young *Hesperocyparis glabra* 'Carolina Sapphire': smooth barked Arizona cypress.

Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

1. This document is ENH382, one of a series of the Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 1993. Revised January 2024. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.
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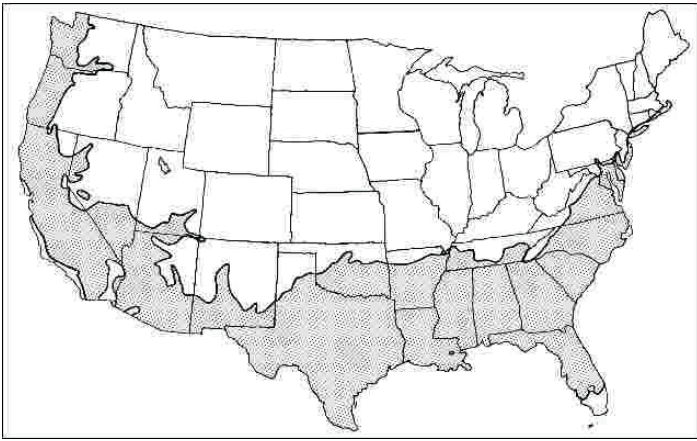


Figure 2. Range

## Description

**Height:** 50 to 70 feet

**Spread:** 10 to 15 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical

**Crown shape:** pyramidal, oval

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Figure 3)

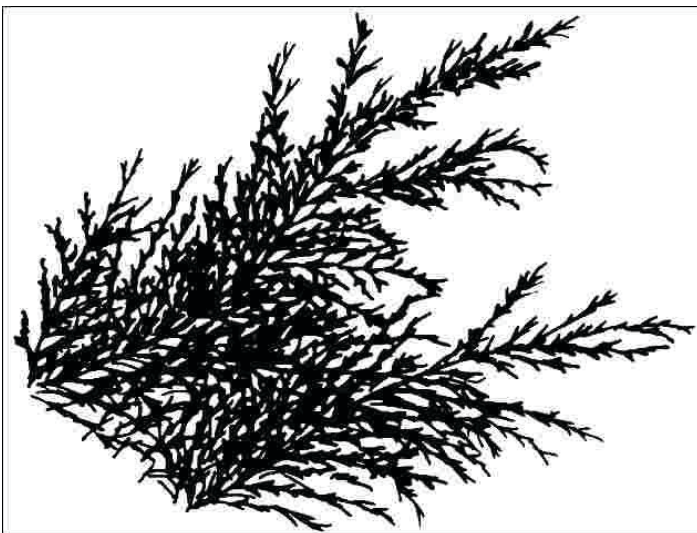


Figure 3. Foliage

**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:** blue or blue-green

**Fall color:** no color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** unknown

**Flower characteristics:** not showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**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 don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** little required

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage

**Current year twig color:** green

**Current year twig thickness:** thin

**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun

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

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

## 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

Smooth barked Arizona cypress should be grown in full sun on well-drained, acid, or alkaline soil. If grown with too much moisture or on a poorly drained clay, a shallow root system will develop making the tree susceptible to wind damage. The species was once widely grown in the southeastern United States but may perform best in the drier parts of the southwest, including west Texas and Oklahoma.

Propagation is by cuttings.

## Pests

No pests are of major concern.

## Diseases

A stem canker has devastated large numbers of smooth barked Arizona cypress in various parts of the country.