

BALD CYPRESS

Taxodium distichum

This remarkable tree grows on some of the harshest of all sites for tree growth: saturated soils with poor aeration. It will do very well, though, in well-drained soils. Commonly lives 600 years.



Description: An unusual and interesting tree with heavily buttressed and fluted base. A tapered bole having "knees" arising as peculiar vertical cone-like growths from the roots when grown near water. The foliage resembles that of a conifer, being lacey and yellow-green, but it is deciduous. It produces 1 to 2" green cones

changing over to brown. Bloom time is in March. Its brown and fibrous bark is similar to cedars.

Natural Habitat: Native to the Eastern U.S. In Eastern N.C., commonly found in swamps, along watercourses and in wetland areas.

Conservation Status: Threatened in Indiana.

Size: 50 - 100' high.

Growth Rate: Rapid.

Light: Full sun to partial shade.

Planting and Care: Best grown in moist, rich acidic soil but will also grow in dry, compacted soil. In dry conditions it will not grow "knees." It is heat and drought tolerant and has a large taproot.

Ornamental Value: Its foliage is particularly pretty in early spring as it leafs out and again in the fall as it turns first golden brown then reddish.

Landscape Usage: Can be used as a specimen or in small groves particularly in permanently wet areas of the landscape such as ponds. It makes a good street tree and holds fast in high winds. It produces good shade in the summer and allows full sunlight after leaf fall in the winter. Knees will pop up several feet from the tree so it's best to plant away from regularly mowed areas.

Commercial/Traditional Uses: The wood of bald cypress is fairly durable and has many uses in outdoor construction. Resins obtained from the cones have been used as an analgesic in folk remedies for skin ailments.

Wildlife Benefits: Seeds are eaten by a variety of birds.