Bald Cypress

*Taxodium distichum*

Bald Cypress are deciduous-needled pyramidal trees that can reach 100 to 150 feet in height. They grow at a moderately fast rate, reaching 40 to 50 feet in about 15 to 25 years. Growth is fastest on moist well-drained soils in full sun. Trees are highly tolerant of drought, although they are adapted to wetlands. In wet areas they will develop “knees.”

**Propagation**

**Seed** – Collect mature dry female cones and break apart. Sow seeds and cone fragments (approximately 5,200 seeds per pound of cleaned seeds) together for ease. Soak seeds for five minutes in ethyl alcohol and cold stratify for three months in damp sphagnum moss to overcome internal dormancy.

**Cuttings** – Rooting cuttings can be difficult and varies by cultivar. Very soft cuttings dipped in 1000 ppm IBA under mist root in low numbers. Cuttings from 2-3 year old seedlings root easily under mist in sand:peat medium, indicating juvenility is important to cutting rooting response. Hardwood cuttings, 4-5 inches long, will also work, dipped in 8000 ppm IBA talc placed in a well shaded and dampened cold frame.

**Grafting** – Whip and tongue field graft with dormant scion wood in spring or late summer on 2-3 year old seedlings. Keep at 55-60°F during callusing.

**Pests and Diseases**

The current Insect Management Guide for Commercial Foliage and Woody Ornamentals can be found at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG012](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG012). The current Professional Disease Management Guide for Ornamental Plants can be found at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP123](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP123).

**Cypress Leaf Beetle**

**Recognition**: Foliage is discolored a bright to dark red and small linear gouges (3 mm long) are found in the needles. Adult beetles are small (4-mm long) with a pale yellow head and body and black markings on the outer margins of the body. They congregate in large numbers in tree crowns and feed on needles. Larvae feed on roots of grasses and weeds.

**Contributing factors**: Adults are active in June and July. Drought or other stress factors can bring on similar needle color change.

**Management recommendations**: In landscape trees, the trees will usually refoliate in the same growing season and no control is needed. In the nursery, direct sprays at adults when they are scouted or apply larvacide to soil with grass and weeds around nursery.
Fall Webworm *Hyphantria cunea*

**Recognition:** Larvae of the black-headed strain are pale-yellow or greenish with two rows of black spots along the back, scattered long hairs and black head capsules. After feeding, the caterpillars hide in bark crevices and other protected areas on the ground and change into amber-brown pupa inside a loose cocoon. The adult is a white moth that deposits about 200 to 300 eggs in one mass on the underside of leaves. Moths are attracted to lights during the night. This caterpillar has several generations per year, starting in the spring. The later occurring generations are typically more noticeable with the extensive webbing in late September.

**Contributing factors:** Unknown. Some years they are a problem.

**Management recommendations:** Use controls specific for caterpillars. Webbing may increase difficulty in getting spray penetration.

Cypress Twig Gall Midge

**Recognition:** Heavy spongy galls of varying sizes are created when female flies lay their eggs on newly developing leaves. The oval, green galls are heavy enough to cause branches to droop under their weight if there are many on the branch. Each gall may contain up to 15 yellow-orange maggots in individual cells. In the autumn, the galls turn brown, drop to the ground with the leaves, and the larvae over-winter in the gall. The adults emerge as flies and can be found for about a month beginning in mid-May. There are two generations per year.

**Contributing factors:** Previous infestations of this insect.

**Management recommendations:** Rake and destroy the fallen leaves and galls. Sprays can be directed at adults when they are scouted.

Mealybugs

**Recognition:** Mealybugs are soft-bodied insects with piercing-sucking mouthparts and a wooly, white, waxy covering. A byproduct of mealybug feeding is sticky honeydew which coats infested foliage and provides a medium for growth of black sooty mold fungi.

**Contributing factors:** Unknown.

**Management recommendations:** Predators (lady bug larvae) can control many mealybug infestations in the landscape. The waxy covering protects the insects from sprays, however horticultural oils or systemic insecticides can be effective.
Rust Mites

Recognition: The Bald Cypress Rust mite is a microscopic eriophyid mite, most active during the warm season, that causes browning of interior needles. It overwinters in bark crevices ready to reproduce and infest new growth in the spring. The mites’ mouthparts rasp the leaf cells causing the needles to become yellowish and then brown. Mites can be seen with a 10-power hand lens and their white cast skins are the best diagnostic.

Contributing factors: Warm weather causes very rapid reproduction.

Management recommendations: Bald cypress is very sensitive to horticultural oils—do not use these to control the mites. Carbaryl, dicofol and oxythioquinox will knock down this mite with thorough foliage coverage.

Needle Blights (Asperisporium, Pestalotia, Phoma spp.)

Recognition: Needle blights cause spotting of the leaves, cones and bark. In very wet seasons, this may become a twig blight.

Contributing factors: Affects trees weakened by dry weather, sunscald or low temperatures.

Management recommendations: Keep plants from becoming stressed. Prune and remove affected plant tissue from the nursery. Fungicide recommendations can be found at [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP123](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP123).

Sources:


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