

Montezuma Baldcypress

Taxodium mucronatum

Secondary Names:

Montezuma Cypress, Sabino, Ahuehuete

Leaf Type: Evergreen

Texas Native: Yes No

Firewise: Yes No



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Tree Description:

A fast-growing, large tree to 70 feet tall and a thick trunk up to 6 feet in diameter or more, with an irregular, rounded or flat-topped crown and drooping branchlets. Unlike the closely related baldcypress, this species does not produce "knees."

Range/Site Description:

Streambanks along the Rio Grande, its tributaries, and nearby resacas. Planted as a landscape tree as far north as Houston, where the leaves become deciduous.

Leaf:

The delicate, light green leaves are flattened, about 0.5" to 0.75" long, very narrow, and arranged in feather-like fashion along two sides of slender branchlets 3" to 6" long; persistent and evergreen in extreme South Texas, but semi-evergreen or deciduous farther north.

Flower:

Male "flowers" in long clusters that resemble oak catkins, 6" to 12" long, with the individual flowers spread out spirally along the central thread-like stem; female "flowers" are small and inconspicuous swellings on the previous year's branchlets.

Fruit:

A round cone, to 1" in diameter, surface rough, green and glaucous at first, but turning brown and woody later.

Bark:

Reddish-brown, smooth on young trunks and branches, but developing shredding scales and, eventually thick, rough ridges and fissures on older trees

Wood:

Wood is similar to baldcypress, and several parts of the tree reportedly have medicinal qualities. Used increasingly as a landscape tree.

Similar Species:

Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) occurs commonly in Central and East Texas and in landscapes across the state, but has shorter male flowers in the spring; also produces "knees."

Interesting Facts:

The largest reported tree of this species, the "Tule tree," near Oaxaca, Mexico, measures over 125 feet tall with a circumference over 150 feet.