

Thuja occidentalis

Kingdom: Plantae (Plants)
Order: Pinales
Family: Cupressaceae
Genus: Thuja
Species: Thuja occidentalis



Thuja occidentalis, commonly known as Eastern Arborvitae or White Cedar, is a species of coniferous evergreen tree native to eastern North America.

In addition to Eastern Arborvitae and White Cedar, Thuja occidentalis is also known by other names,

American Arborvitae
Northern White Cedar
Eastern White Cedar

Characteristic Features

Leaves: Scale like, overlapping leaves arranged in flattened sprays. The leaves are typically dark green to yellow green in colour, depending on the variety.

Cones: Small, oblong cones that are about 1 cm long, with scales that open to release winged seeds.

Bark: Reddish brown to graybrown, fibrous bark that peels off in strips.

Size: Can grow up to 1020 meters tall with a narrow, conical to columnar shape.

Uses

Landscaping: Widely planted as an ornamental tree in gardens, parks, and landscapes due to its dense foliage, attractive form, and tolerance of pruning.

Privacy Screen: Often used as a hedge or privacy screen due to its dense growth habit and ability to be shaped.

Wood: The wood is lightweight, durable, and aromatic, making it valued for making fences, posts, and outdoor furniture.

Essential Oils: Extracts from Thuja occidentalis have been used in traditional medicine and herbal remedies.

Cultivation

Climate: Thrives in temperate climates but can tolerate a range of conditions, including cold winters and hot summers.

Light: Prefers full sun to partial shade.

Soil: Well drained soil is preferred, but it can tolerate a range of soil types, including clay and sandy soils.

Propagation: Typically propagated from seeds, which require cold stratification for germination, or by semi hard wood cuttings.

Maintenance

Regular watering, especially during dry periods, to establish a strong root system.

Pruning to maintain its shape and remove dead or diseased branches.

Toxicity

All parts of *Thuja occidentalis*, including the foliage and seeds, contain thujone, which can be toxic if ingested in large quantities. It is important to handle and use the plant with caution.

Thuja occidentalis is valued for its versatility in landscaping and its hardy nature, making it a popular choice for both residential and commercial settings