

Chamaecyparis pisifera - Sawara Falsecypress (*Cupressaceae*)

Chamaecyparis pisifera is known mainly for its smaller evergreen variants. Sawara Falsecypress are shrubs that have distinctive growth habits and vibrant foliage colors rather than the straight species.

FEATURES

Form

- usually a medium- to large-sized evergreen shrub
- the species form, which is rarely available in the nursery trade, is a 60' tall x 20' wide tree, but the small, medium, and large shrub forms commonly available in the trade range from 3'-20' tall x similar widths, depending upon cultivar
- upright pyramidal to pendulous irregular growth habits, depending upon cultivar
- slow growth rate
- a plant whose species form would be unrecognizable to most horticulturists, since the odd-looking cultivars are the exclusive selections in the nursery trade; 2 common types exist:
 - Threadleaf types, which have stringy, pendulous combinations of awl-like or scale-like foliage, of green or golden-yellow color, on broadly spreading shrubs
 - Squarrosa types, with short, fluffy, twisting-needle type foliage that is usually blue-silver, on upright shrubs with a central leader

Culture

- full sun to partial sun
- prefers moist, well-drained, neutral to slightly acidic soils, but is adaptable to poor soils, dry soils, alkaline soils, compacted soils, heat, and drought
- few disease or pest problems
- commonly available in containers or B&B form, with many cultivars

Foliage

- scale-like or awl-like leaves press close to the thready stems (for 'Filifera' or 'Mop' types) or fluffy, short, juvenile-foliaged-type needles stick out from the stems (for 'Boulevard' types)

-"evergreen" although the foliage of many cultivars is yellow, gold, or blue-silver in color

Flowers/Cones

-ornamentally inconspicuous

Fruits/Cones

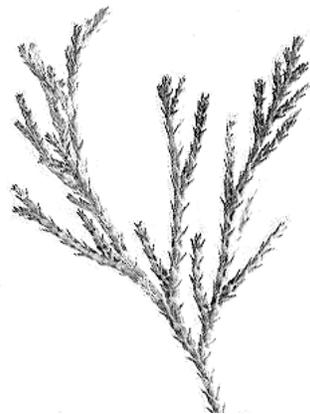
-ornamentally inconspicuous

Twigs

-thin and brown, and often hidden by the foliage

Trunk

-often not seen on the cultivar forms, being somewhat hidden by the evergreen foliage, but exfoliating in thin reddish-brown strips on larger specimens



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Function

-focal point, specimen, entranceway, or foundation shrub

Texture

- fine texture
- thick density

Assets

- foliage color variants that are "evergreen"
- variable growth habits for different cultivars

Liabilities

- yellow-foliaged types, which must be placed in full sun for best color, are prone to winter burn without protection from the winter sun and harsh winds
- 'Boulevard' has its dead interior needles remain on the stems, which gives an untidy appearance

Habitat

- Zones 4 to 8
- Native to Japan

SELECTIONS

Alternates

-foliage color variant shrubs that are "evergreen" (*Abies koreana* 'Horstmann's Silberlocke', *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Crippsii', *Juniperus chinensis* 'Saybrook Gold', *Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Star', *Pinus sylvestris* 'Glaucia Nana', *Thuja occidentalis* 'Rheingold', etc.)

Cultivars - Variants - Related species

-the native species is 60' x 20' with green-colored foliage that occurs in "sprays", rarely seen in Western cultivation and rarely available in the trade
A sampling of common cultivars that look totally unlike the species form are:

-*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Boulevard'

(also known as 'Cyanoviridis' or 'Squarrosa Cyanoviridis') - Blue Falsecypress - foliage is composed of tight, fluffy clusters of silver-blue short needles (as are many of the 'Squarrosa' types), forming a pyramidal habit to 12' x 5', with

the liability of interior foliage being persistent, dead, tan-colored, and quite visible; it can be removed by rubbing the stems with a gloved hand, but this becomes increasingly difficult as the shrub grows in size

-'Filifera' - usually 6' x 8' but can be larger; green foliage is scale-like, covering thin pendulous stems with an overall semi-weeping habit

-'Golden Mop' (also known as 'Gold Mop' or 'Mops') - Mops Falsecypress - yellow scale-like foliage covers the thin pendulous (mop-like) stems with a relatively low semi-weeping habit, slowly maturing to 5' x 7'; the golden-yellow color stays that way if the plant is sited in full sun, unlike many other "golden" cultivars which fade by mid-summer to yellowish green; unfortunately, the exposure of 'Golden Mop' in full sun also makes it prone to winter burn in northern climates, creating unattractive yellow-brown foliage throughout much of the winter

