**Metasequoia glyptostroboides** - Dawn Redwood *(Taxodiaceae)*

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* is a large, deciduous conifer with distinct conical form, fast growth rate, and fairly broad adaptability. Dawn Redwood is less tolerant of adverse conditions than its similar relative, Bald Cypress.

**FEATURES**

**Form**
- large specimen tree
  - maturing at about 70’ tall x 25’ wide in the constructed landscape; taller in its native habitat
  - upright pyramidal form as in many conifer trees (e.g. *Picea*), but can become more broad-rounded with age.
  - rather uniform, symmetrical habit that is best expressed in open areas. Very similar in habit to Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)
  - medium to fast growth rate (ca. 1.5’ per year); may reach 50’ in about 20 years.

**Culture**
- full sun to partial sun
- performs best in deep soils with good drainage but also with uniform moisture; tolerates wet soils as well and can be grown next to streams or ponds. It is not particularly adaptable to alkaline soils, but can tolerate somewhat heavy soils.
- propagated by seeds and rooted cuttings
- no major problems with diseases or pests, but occasional problems with canker may occur
- moderate to low availability in B&B form

**Foliage**
- deciduous, opposite arrangement (differs from Bald Cypress which is mostly alternate arrangement)
  - flattened needles about 0.5” long x 0.1” wide
  - bright green above and paler green below
  - foliage emerges in mid-spring and provides a very feathery texture
  - autumn color is brown and can be quite attractive before leaf drop

**Flowers/Strobili**
- trees are monoecious, male and female flowers borne on the same plant; male flowers in panicle-like structures; female flowers solitary

**Fruits/Cones**
- cones are rounded, about 1” thick, pendulous and long-stalked

**Twigs**
- opposite arrangement, brownish-red and lightly ridged
- large winter buds (when compared to Bald Cypress)

**Trunk**
- large, single trunk develops a broad base and tapers to the apex
- the bark is reddish-brown, exfoliating in thin, vertical strips
- the tree is described as having "armpits" because of an indentation at the base of each branch; this character distinguishes the species from Bald Cypress

**USAGE**

**Function**
- specimen, focal point, screen, groupings

**Texture**
- medium-fine in foliage and fine when bare
- thick density in foliage and when bare

**Assets**
- attractive, symmetrical form and fine texture
- does not need pruning for symmetrical form
- easy maintenance

**Liabilities**
- cold hardiness may be marginal in parts of zone 5; late season growth may be damaged by early frosts
- Japanese beetle may cause cosmetic damage
- intolerant of high pH soils

**Habitat**
- Zones 5 to 8
- Native to the Western China

**SELECTIONS**

**Alternates**
- stately pyramidal trees of deciduous foliage (*Alnus glutinosa, Liquidambar styraciflua, Oxydendrum arboreum, Taxodium distichum, etc.*) or evergreen foliage (*Abies concolor, Picea abies, Picea pungens, Pinus strobus 'Fastigiata', Tsuga canadensis, etc.*)
- trees with fine texture, at least when in foliage (*Gleditsia triacanthos, Quercus phellos, Salix babylonica, Taxodium distichum, etc.*)
- other deciduous conifers (*Larix, Pseudolarix and Taxodium*)

**Cultivars – Variants - Related Species**
- *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* 'National' - a narrow conical form selected at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC
- *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* 'Sheridan Spire' a narrower and more compact form than the species; selected by Sheridan Nurseries

**Special Note:** The Dawn Redwood is famous as the "fossil tree" that was rediscovered in China in the 1940's. It was though to have been extinct, but it actually survived in an isolated mountainous region. In 1948 seed from one tree was sent to the Arnold Arboretum which, in turn, distributed to arboreta across the U.S. In the 1980's and 1990's additional seeds were obtained from different trees in China and it is likely that new selections will be developed from these seed lots.