

Taxodium distichum

Bald Cypress, Baldcypress

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia

Arlington • Alexandria • mgnv.org

Found along wet stream banks, swamps, and river bottoms, Bald Cypress* has a root system, which often produces irregular structures called “[knees](#)” that rise above the ground or water’s surface. This conifer is referred to as “bald” since it is deciduous, losing its foliage in the winter.

Tree	Tree, Fruit (Jul/Oct), Bark,** Fall Foliage, Knees
Height: 50–70 feet	
Spread: 20–35 feet	
Bloom Color: Brown	
Characteristics	
Long-lived, deciduous conifer with pyramidal to conical shape and trunk fluted at the base	
Alternate, whorled , soft, needle-like yellow-green leaves arranged like feathers	
Brown, tassel-like, paniculated , male flowers and round, green female flowers at branch tips Mar–Apr	
Spherical, leathery, green cones (galbuli), ripen to brown from October to December and shatter into irregular seeds	
Foliage turns orange, cinnamon, copper in fall	
Fissured red-brown-gray bark with stringy texture	
Attributes	
Tolerates clay soil , wet soil, heat, strong winds, and air pollution	
No serious pests or diseases; deer rarely-to-seldom severely damage	
Provides food for waterfowl and squirrels and nesting sites for Yellow-Throated Warbler, Bald Eagle, Pileated Woodpecker, Osprey, and herons	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Acidic	Trees that don't like water!
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	
Water Requirements : Moist, Wet	*It is often planted outside of its native range, which is along the southeastern and Gulf coasts and the lower Mississippi River up to IL. In the Mid-Atlantic Region, it is not native to DC and is rare in the DE Coastal Plain and in PA. It is native mainly in the Coastal Plain of MD. In VA, it is locally common along the Coastal Plain and rare in the outer southern Piedmont. It is not native to NoVA. **An eastern gray squirrel rests on a bald cypress branch.
Use as ornamental lawn tree for large landscapes or in wet areas or in rain gardens (> 150 sq. feet)	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 4a–9b	

developed by **Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria**

Images by Elaine Mills, Robert Kline (sign), and Mary Free (October fruit, Fairlington, VA and bark) Glencarlyn Garden, National Arboretum, and (knees) Meadowlark Botanical Gardens



Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility.