

Italian cypress

Cupressus sempervirens L.

Cypress family (Cupressaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Italian cypress is a handsome introduced conifer occasionally planted for ornament and in forestry tests. Columnar Italian cypress (var. *stricta* Ait.), the common variety, is readily identified by the very narrow columnar crown. The paired scalelike leaves in four-angled twigs have a gland dot on back, and the rounded hard gray or brown cones are relatively large, 1–1¼ inches (2.5–3 cm) in diameter.

Medium-sized coniferous evergreen tree, resinous and aromatic, becoming 60 ft (18 m) tall and 1½ ft (0.5 m) in trunk diameter. In its native home this is a large tree with stout trunk and spreading branches. The variety commonly cultivated has short erect branches. Bark brown, smoothish, becoming rough and fissured. Inner bark light brown with outer reddish layer, fibrous, resinous and bitter. Leafy twigs alternate, numerous, crowded and spreading, much branched, slender, less than ¼ inch (1.5 mm) in diameter.

Leaves scalelike, paired in four rows, closely pressed against twig, blunt, with gland dot in groove on back, about ½ inch (1 mm) long, dull green, covering twig and shedding together.

Male and female cones borne on the same tree (monoecious), the male elliptical, more than ⅛ inch (3 mm) long, yellowish. Female cones short-stalked, woody, composed of 8–14 flat cone-scales irregularly 5–6 sided, with a short point or knob in center. Seeds 8–20 at base of each cone-scale, ⅜ inch (5 mm) long, elliptical, flattened, angled, and slightly winged, brown.

The wood is described as yellow or light brown, moderately hard, fine-textured, aromatic, easily worked, and durable. Elsewhere, it has been used for construction, furniture, and clothes chests. It has not been used in Hawaii.

This species is very common in gardens throughout Hawaii. It has also been tested on a small scale in the Forest Reserves. A total of 3000 trees were planted in the forests between 1923 and 1955. Examples may be seen at Kokee, Kauai, and in the Olaa Forest Parks along the Volcano Road on Hawaii.

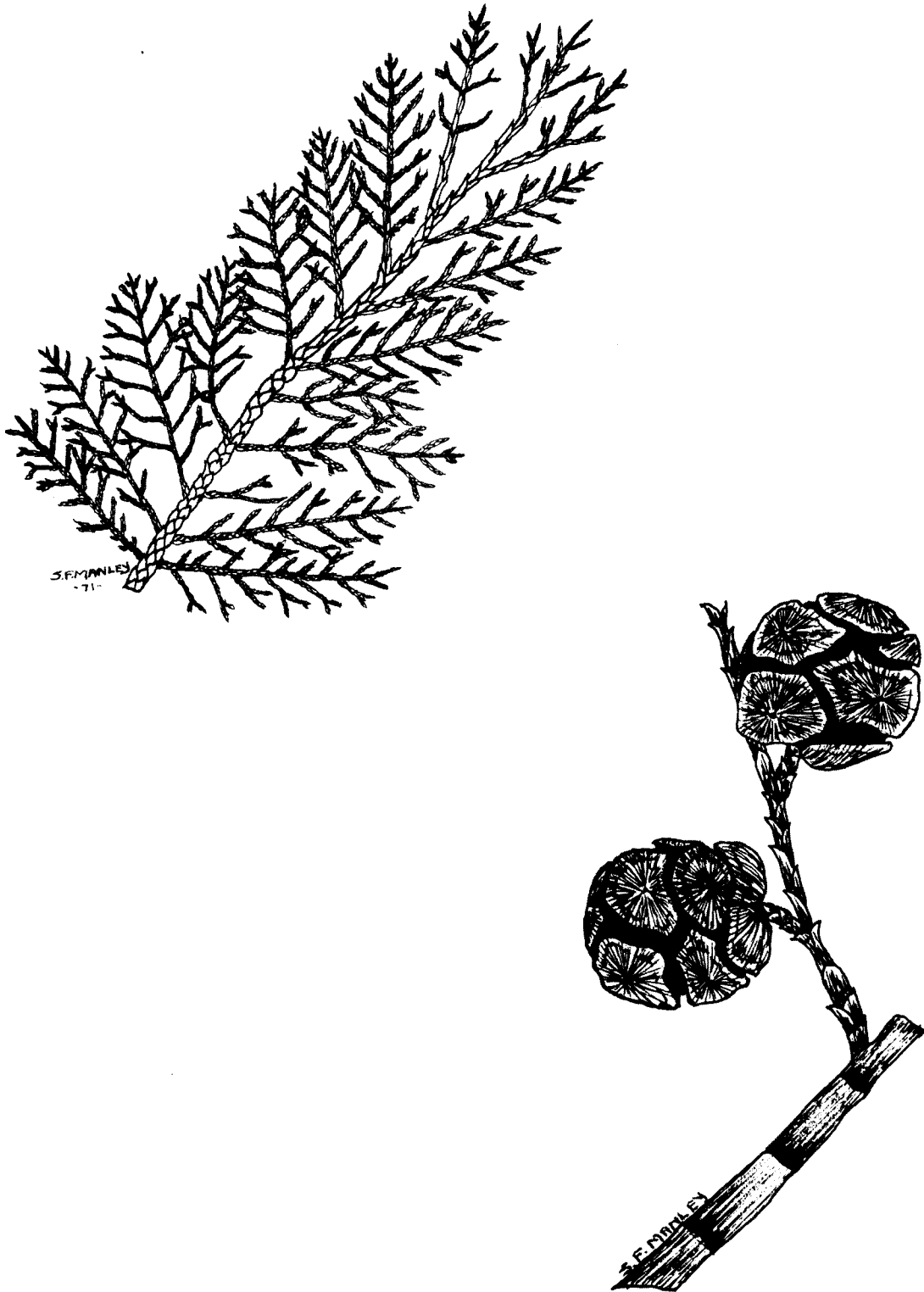
This classic cypress of ancient Greece and Rome is conspicuous in formal gardens and cemeteries of southern Europe. It is hardy in subtropical and warm temperature climates, such as southern continental United States from Florida to Arizona and California. Because of its narrow shape, it is used for borders as well as formal planting. Hedges can be formed by clipping.

Champion

Height 82 ft (25.0 m), c.b.h. 8.4 ft (2.6 m), spread 20 ft (6.1 m). Ulupalakua Ranch, Ulupalakua, Maui (1968).

Range

Native in the eastern Mediterranean region of southern Europe in Syria, Cilicia, Greece, and the islands of Rhodes, Crete, and Cyprus and in the mountains of northern Iran in western Asia.



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Leafy twig (above, twig with cones (lower right), 1 X (P.R. v. 2)