

# Atlantic White Cedar

*Chamaecyparis thyoides* (Whitecedar Falsecypress or Atlantic White cedar), is a species of *Chamaecyparis*, native to the Atlantic coast of North America. It grows on wet sites on the coastal plain at altitudes from sea level up to 130 ft altitude. The common name "Atlantic White Cedar" has been rejected by the American Joint Committee on Horticultural Nomenclature, as it is a cypress, not a cedar. However, it is still the most widely used name for this species. It is also spelled "Atlantic Whitecedar", combining the words "white" and "cedar" to indicate that the tree is not a true cedar.



Atlantic white-cedar grows in a narrow coastal belt 50 to 130 miles wide from southern Maine to northern Florida and west to southern Mississippi. Atlantic white-cedar forests, however, have always been of minor importance because the scarcity of suitable sites makes distribution of the species within the coastal belt exceedingly patchy. White-cedar is most important commercially in southeastern New Jersey, southeastern Virginia, eastern North Carolina, and northwestern Florida



It is an evergreen coniferous tree growing 50-75 feet tall, with feathery foliage in moderately flattened sprays, green to glaucous blue-green in color. The leaves are scale-like and produced in opposite decussate pairs on somewhat flattened shoots; seedlings up to a year old have needle-like leaves. The seed cones are globose, with 6-10 scales, green or purple, maturing brown in 5-7 months after pollination. The pollen cones are purple or brown, releasing their yellow pollen in spring.

The wood is reported to endure moisture indefinitely; it has been used for fence-posts, ties and shingles. The lightweight, straight-grained wood of Atlantic white-cedar is easily worked, resistant to decay, and shrinks and warps very little during seasoning. These characteristics probably govern its use today as much as they did in colonial times. In those times it was used for shingles, barrels, tanks, and small boats. Today it is still used where durability, light weight, and resistance to weathering are important considerations: telephone poles, piling, ties, siding, boat railing, and ice cream tubs. Atlantic white-cedar has limited value for wildlife-white-tailed deer browse its foliage-and is occasionally used as an ornamental.

