

JAPANESE CRYPTOMERIA

Family: Cupressaceae | Genus: CRYPTOMERIA japonica

Type : Evergreen, Trees

Sun Exposure : Full Sun, Partial Shade

Water : Moderate Water, Regular Water

Planting Zones : US (Upper South) / Zone 6, MS (Middle South) / Zone 7, LS (Lower South) / Zone 8

Graceful conifer, fast growing (34 feet a year) in youth. Eventually skyline tree to 100 feet tall, 30 feet wide at base, with straight, columnar trunk, thin red-brown bark peeling in strips. Slightly pendulous branches are clothed with needlelike leaves 121 inches long; foliage is soft bright green to bluish green during the growing season, brownish purple in cold weather. Roundish, red-brown cones 341 inches wide. Trees are sometimes planted in groves for Japanese garden effect; they also make a good tall screen. For holiday decorations they are soft and do not shed. Good substitute for Leyland Cypress. Not browsed by deer.

Benefits of Cryptomeria Trees

Cryptomeria Trees are widely enjoyed for their fast-growth and easy maintenance. Though many gardeners make assurances this tree will “thrive on neglect”, it is better to provide proper watering and sunlight. Cryptomerias are loved for their feathery touch, fast-growth, and elegant pointed figure. Many landscapers choose to plant Cryptomeria Radicans over the more common [Thuja trees](#) because it offers a unique shape and slightly richer color.

Cryptomeria Tree Concerns

Occasional pests can affect Cryptomeria Trees, such as **mites or moth larvae**, which feed on the young tree’s leaves. Additionally, root rot may affect trees if watering and mulch schedules are poorly maintained. This is especially prominent in young saplings. Finally, needle necrosis and branch dieback can damage trees during periods of drought.

Types of Cryptomeria

Cryptomeria makes up the genus of both conical and evergreen trees that hail from the forests of China and Japan. Oftentimes, cryptomeria trees have a conical growth habit and red to brown bark that create a striking display. They grow best in well-drained, deep soil that is moist but tolerate a wide range of soil types. Cryptomeria makes for ideal screening and specimen trees because of their year-round and dense foliage.

Taiwan Cryptomeria

The evergreen Taiwan cryptomeria (*Taiwania cryptomerioides*) has a medium texture and moderate growth rate. It has a conical crown with outspreading branches and grows 25 to 50 feet tall, creating a commanding landscape presence. The blue to green, ½-inch needles on Taiwan cryptomeria are triangular in shape and the cones grow ½ inch wide. Taiwan cryptomeria grows best in full sun and deep, well-drained soil. Plant Taiwan Cryptomeria in USDA Hardiness Zone 9.

Cryptomeria ‘Sekkan-sugi’

Cryptomeria ‘Sekkan-sugi’ (*Cryptomeria japonica* ‘Sekkan-sugi’) is a conical evergreen tree that grows best in USDA zones 6 to 9. It grows over 30 feet tall and has a spread of 15 to 30 feet wide. Cryptomeria ‘Sekkan-sugi’ has a clumping growth habit and open branch structure with gracefully shaped branches that are more pendant than most cryptomeria species. (See References 2) The spring-emerging foliage on cryptomeria ‘Sekkan-sugi’ starts off as a pale shade of yellow with a herringbone pattern to turn deep green as the needles age by summer. The crinkled brown, fall-emerging, dangling cones suspend from the ends of each branch and are followed by new cones in winter. Cryptomeria ‘Sekkan-sugi’ grows best in full sun to part shade and deep soils that are slightly acidic. They require protection from high winds.

Benjamin Franklin

- Foliage stays green even with exposure to cold or wind.
- Salt tolerant.

Black Dragon

- New spring growth is light green; mature foliage is blackish green.
- Grows only about 5 feet high and 7 feet wide in 10 years.

Chapel Hill

- Raindrop-shaped tree 5-10 feet high and 4-8 feet wide.
- Upswept branches with blue-green foliage year-round.
- Coneless.

Plume Cedar, Plume Cryptomeria

Elegans

- Quite unlike species.
- Feathery, grayish green, soft-textured foliage turns rich coppery red or purplish in winter.
- Grows slowly into dense pyramid to 2060 feet tall, about 20 feet wide.
- Trunks on old trees may lean or curve.
- For effective display, give it space.

Globosa Nana

- Dwarf selection with very slow, upright growth to 4 feet high and wide.
- Dark green foliage.
- Boxwood substitute.

Kitayama

- Narrow, upright, (to 1518 feet tall and 810 feet wide), more compact form and better winter color make this an improvement over 'Yoshino'.

Pygmaea

- ('Nana').
- DWARF CRYPTOMERIA.
- Bushy dwarf 12 feet high, 2 feet wide.
- Dark green leaves, twisted branches.

Vilmoriniana

- Slow-growing dwarf to 12 feet high and wide.
- Fluffy, gray-green foliage turns bronze in late fall and winter.
- Rock garden or container plant.

Yoshino

- Resembles the species but is smaller (to 3040 feet tall and 20 feet wide), with bluish green foliage that takes on reddish tones in winter.



The first step in the proper planting of a Cryptomeria Tree is deciding if it is the right tree. Cryptomerias, despite their hardiness, do have some specific needs, such as sunlight and water preferences. Cryptomeria Trees **prefer full sun, though modest afternoon shade can be beneficial**, especially in drought-prone regions of the Southwest. With regards to water, Cryptomerias are drought-resistant, but regular watering during these dry spells will ensure successful growth despite periodic times without water.

Once a location has been identified, order either an individual Cryptomeria Tree, or a set of saplings if planting a screen, from The Tree Center. When the sapling(s) arrive, observe the size of the root ball, or the collection of roots at the base of the tree. The size of the root ball determines the size of the hole. **Generally, the hole should be two times wider than the root ball, and an inch or two shorter than the height of the root ball.** The hole size is where many first time tree planters make a mistake. The hole should not be too deep – in fact, if the hole is deeper than the root ball, water and air will have a more difficult time reaching the root system. The tree will also settle over time, which accounts for the variance in hole depth. A wide hole allows for the roots to spread evenly, enabling the tree to root itself with ease.

Once the hole has been dug, hold the sapling vertically in the hole. Backfill the hole with soil and water. If using mulch, add this now in a layer no more than three inches deep. Water immediately upon mulching. It can be a good idea to water a newly-planted Cryptomeria Tree every day for the first month after planting.

Soil Type

Soil matters a lot when it comes to the overall success of most trees. The soil is composed of broken down rocks and minerals, and the sizes of these particles affects the ability of the plant's root system to locate and absorb the water and air which perforates the soil. The three main categories of soil are: clay, silt, and sand. Clay and silt are both made of small grains. These soil particles stick together, making the transfer of water and air difficult. Depending on the moisture levels of the soil, the root systems of some plants may have a difficult time spreading. Sand, on the other hand, has much larger particles. Water and air move too quickly through sand, often passing by the roots of a plant before it has time to intake enough.

Cryptomeria Radicans, however, **are adaptable to many different types of soil**. While most trees prefer loam, which is a consistent mix of differently sized particles, Cryptomeria Trees can adapt to sandy, clay-like, or silty soils with ease. If soils are sandier, be sure to water more frequently. If soils are silty or clay-like, be sure the Cryptomeria Radicans is not submerged in standing water.

Water Access

Cryptomeria Trees are drought-tolerant, so periodic mild dry spells will not damage the foliage or root systems significantly; however, almost all trees prefer regular and consistent water access. **Regular rainfall is generally sufficient for a Cryptomeria Tree**. If droughts or dry-spells persist, be sure to water the Cryptomeria to a depth of three inches once a week. Irrigation systems can be used to effectively manage water distribution, and these systems will usually also conserve water.

Mulch and Fertilizer

Many landscapers will advocate for mulch and fertilizer in order to ensure the fastest-growth and happiest trees. Cryptomeria Radicans do benefit from both of these additives, which not only ensure successful intake of readily available needs, such as air and water, but can also improve the overall quality of soil components. Fertilizers used with Cryptomeria Trees are best if they are well-balanced. **Slow-release fertilizers with low ratios, such as 10-10-10 are best**. This refers to the proportion of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Fertilizers will help the tree grow quickly and healthily. Do not overuse fertilizers. Follow the package directions, or simply fertilize once a year early in spring.

Mulch is also helpful when it comes to the absorption of air and water. Mulch protects the soil layer surrounding the tree, meaning run-off is limited. It also will conserve water, so less water is needed to reach a depth of 3 inches.

How to Buy Cryptomeria Trees

Cryptomeria Trees, although hardy once established, require well-tended care in the initial stages of growth. The Tree Center provides this early care so that once planted properly, the Cryptomeria Trees will be successful. Buying Cryptomeria Radicans Trees is as simple as visiting The Tree Center and ordering a batch of young saplings for a new privacy screen.

How to Plant Cryptomeria Trees

Sun: Plant in full sun to partial shade.

Water: Water immediately after planting and once per week for the first year. Water during absence of rain or extended dry spells.

When to Plant: Plant in early spring or late fall.

Information on Cryptomeria Trees

Cryptomeria, meaning 'hidden parts' refers to the single tree within the genus. The tree is most well-known in Japan, where its English name, Japanese Cedar, references its Japanese name, Sugi. Although also endemic to China, genetic analysis has demonstrated and supported the belief that it was at some point introduced to the region. Primarily used as a forest plantation tree in Japan, Cryptomerias are often used ornamentally in the United States. Cryptomeria Trees are a national symbol of Japan, and their wood is valued for interior decorating and construction.

<https://www.thetreecenter.com/cryptomeria-radicans/>

<https://www.naturehills.com/cryptomeria-yoshinio>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/all/cryptomeria-japonica>

<https://www.fast-growing-trees.com/products/cryptomeriaradicans>

[https://www.evergreenplantnursery.com/Cryptomeria-Japanese-Cedar-s/..](https://www.evergreenplantnursery.com/Cryptomeria-Japanese-Cedar-s/)