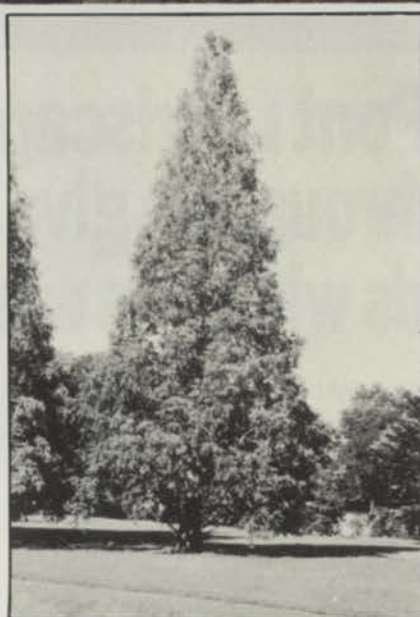


## Dawn redwood and baldcypress

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**Baldcypress and dawn redwood** appear very similar from a distance, but have certain distinct differences. Baldcypress in the color photo and dawn redwood is the black and white photo.



The purpose of this new monthly mini-section on characteristics of plants is to help landscape managers correctly identify and care for specific plants. It will include tips on diseases, insects, and physiological problems of specific plants of interest to the professional plant manager.

An effort will be made to keep technical jargon to a minimum and emphasize key characteristics used to identify common landscape plants. Often, several closely related species will be presented to reduce confusion.

Most diseases and physiological problems are correctly identified

based on the host plant. Scale insects are numerous and rather indistinct. When identified as willow scale, pine scale, or *Euonymus* scale, we can logically and accurately recommend the best control measures.

Leaf spots are another rather ambiguous problem. Almost every plant contracts leaf spots but rarely are they serious. However, if the leaf spot is identified as *Entomosporium* leaf spot or *Photinia x fraseri*, Fraser photinia, then it is imperative that control measures are implemented. Identification separates serious from nonserious pests.

This first column will cover two oft-confused trees, *Taxodium distichum*, common baldcypress, and *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, dawn redwood. Common baldcypress is native to low wet areas from Delaware to Florida and Texas. Dawn redwood was thought extinct until re-discovered in China and introduced to cultivation through the efforts of the Arnold Arboretum in the mid-40's.

Both species have a feathery, conical to pyramidal outline and may assume the appearance of an inverted ice-cream cone. Baldcypress has alternately arranged branches. Dawn redwood branches oppose each other and drop off along with the needles in the fall.

Dawn redwood requires a moist, well-drained acid soil and does not tolerate swampy conditions. Baldcypress is found in swamps in the wild, but makes its best growth in moist, well-drained, acid soils.

Dawn redwood does not appear as susceptible as baldcypress to chlorosis. I have observed horrible chlorosis on baldcypress in the Midwest. Iron capsules implanted in the trunk corrected the problem temporarily.

Both have rich green leaves and excellent rusty-red to orange-brown fall color. The bark is reddish-brown and offers winter interest.

In the Midwest, galls caused by a mite may form on baldcypress, but there is considerable variance from tree to tree. These are not serious but are rather unsightly.

Both species can be grown from Zone 5 to Zone 8, with baldcypress native into Florida (Zone 9). I have seen dawn redwood on the University of Maine campus in a protected courtyard where the top had been killed back. Temperatures may reach -30 degrees F. in Orono, ME. Baldcypress is slightly more cold tolerant and also more heat tolerant.

Interestingly, 'knees' are not produced on baldcypress unless they are located in or near water. I have never observed knees under normal landscape conditions.

Pond cypress, *Taxodium ascendens* is similar to baldcypress. The primary difference is the needles of pond cypress are more flattened and point toward the end of the stem.

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