

Leyland Cypress

× *Cupressocyparis leylandii*



Leyland Cypress is a rapid growing conifer averaging three or more feet per year. Its rapid growth makes this tree ideal for hedges, windbreaks, and Christmas tree production. Its overall vigor makes this tree very easy to grow.

Group:	Gymnosperm
Family:	Cupressaceae
Duration:	Perennial
Growth Habit:	Tree
Kingdom	Plantae – Plants
Subkingdom	Tracheobionta – Vascular plants
Superdivision	Spermatophyta – Seed plants
Division	Coniferophyta – Conifers
Class	Pinopsida
Order	Pinales
Family	Cupressaceae – Cypress family
Genus	Callitropsis Oerst. – Nootka cypress
Species	Callitropsis ×leylandii

Soil Types - Leyland Cypress; Leyland Cypress grows well in a wide range of soils, ranging from all sand to pure Georgia red clay. In soils with a PH of 5.0 to 8.0, however best growth falls between 5.5 and 6.5. When PH falls below 5.0 food intake is greatly reduced, lime or wood ashes should be applied. PH above 7.0 and minor elements or trace minerals are not as available to the tree. Sulfur or acid fertilizers should be used. Iron sulfate or magnesium sulfate (Epson Salts) will also help to lower Ph. Both are excellent for deep green color. When planting in very sandy soils adding organic matter is recommended to improve the soils ability to hold water and nutrients. When planting in hard clay soils, its best to dig the hole several feet deep and fill with soft loam soil to give the young tree a faster, more aggressive root system. Also the deeper hole helps with drainage. Leylands prefer well drained soils but will tolerate the opposite. Number one problem in clay soils is a young tree is planted in a shallow hole, rains fill the hole, where water stands for long periods of time. Causing the roots to rot and the tree dies. Many people are confused with the name cypress. Leylands are in the family of false cypresses, with no relationship to the Bold Cypress that grows in the southern swamps. Leylands should never be planted in soils that are excessively wet for long periods of time. Since the leylands have a shallow root system, weeds and grass growing around the tree will bring the tree growth to a standstill. Using plastic ground cover, sold in most landscape stores, and

mulching, will improve your growth three fold. Not only stopping weeds and grass, it will hold soil moisture and maintain a lower more even soil temperature, stimulating more aggressive root growth.

Planting - Never plant trees deeper than originally planted. Doing so can cause rotting of the stem and death to the tree. In areas of dry weather drip irrigation is recommended. Leyland are very drought tolerant, however they grow very slow without adequate water. Staking young trees is recommended, heavy rain, wind can cause trees to fall on to the ground, allowing bacteria and fungus to attack the young tree, causing injury or death. When tying trees to stakes remember the tree will continue to grow. Loosely tie the tree with several twist ties to allow for growth. Check trees every three months and loosen as needed. If this is not done, the twist tie will grow into the tree causing injury. After strong storms or hurricanes large leylands may be bent over. If the tree can be stood back up you will need to stake the tree. You can use four 6 1/2 ft to 8 ft metal fence posts. Run wire around the upper part of the tree, best to run the wire thru a piece of hose to prevent rubbing the bark off the trunk, and loop the wire back to the post. Now you have two wires running alongside each other. Use a long screw driver to twist the two wires together, pulling the lines tight. Start first with the side you need to pull the tree towards the most. Then follow with each of the other stakes. A large tree will need anywhere from six months to one year to reestablish itself. The one question that comes up often, "when is the best time to plant." For the most part, container trees can be planted year around, provided the ground isn't frozen. The exception is planting liners, (nursery term for a tree that is reproduced by propagation) Young Leyland Cypress liners cannot withstand as much cold as older more mature trees. As a rule 8 to 10 degrees is their limit. Older trees can withstand temperatures of 0 degrees, maybe as low as - 10 degrees. From lower Virginia and north to New York, plant liners in early spring, starting in mid March to early April to as late as early November. Older trees can be planted until the ground freezes. I personally prefer planting early enough for the tree to become established before going into winter. This takes four to eight weeks. All growth and root development stop when soil temperatures drops below 50 degrees. Below Virginia many nurseries and Christmas tree growers field plant year around, weather permitting, with container planting waiting till warmer weather approaches. When planting a potted tree, remember the only water source the tree has, is its small root ball, and all the water the tree uses must come from there until new roots can grow into the surrounding soil. New trees should be watered twice weekly, under hot conditions possibly more. Care should be taken not to over water. More trees die from over watering than under.

Fertilizing Leyland Cypress - Anyone who has been to a garden center or looked through a nursery catalog has come to realize the enormous amount of different fertilizers there are for sale. This confuses many of the most experienced growers. I can only imagine how the average homeowner feels. To simplify this I'll break down fertilizer into four categories, Garden, Time Release, Water Soluble, and Organic. Garden fertilizer is the cheap fertilizer you find being sold everywhere from your local garden center to your local grocery store. The 50lb bags have the numbers 6-6-6, 8-8-8, or 10-10-10 in large print and lawn fertilizer 16-4-8. I personally have nothing good to say about this type of fertilizer. The nitrogen source is very caustic and can severely injure or kill your trees. After applying this type of fertilizer you will see any damage occurring in less than 7 days, and there is very little you can do. The overall best fertilizer you can use is Time Release. This means just what it says, the nutrients are released over a long period of time. For short term crops, bedding plants or garden plants, a 3 month release is good, but for trees and especially Leyland Cypress look for 8 to 9 month release or even a 12 to 14 month. Apply in early spring and your trees will have the proper nutrients all year. Water soluble fertilizers are powders that dissolve in water. This type of fertilizer are very

mild and non-burning. They are marketed under many names, the most common are Peters, and Miracle Grow. The nutrients are readily available to plants, also its very hard to over fertilize and injure your trees, however it must be applied once or twice per month during the growing season. Organic fertilizers are derived from organic sources. Manure, sludge, fish emulsion, kelp or seaweed, dried blood, the list is almost endless. This group of fertilizers are for the most part very safe and beneficial to use. I recommend using this type of fertilizer with both Time Release and Water Soluble. The main reason for this, organic fertilizers will increase microbial activity in the soil. These microbes convert different types of nitrogen into a usable form for plants. I myself like Fish Emulsion, it contains all the nutrients, trace minerals, amino acids, and enzymes. Its one of the most complete fertilizers on the planet. When first planting a young tree, your first concern is to establish a well developed root system. Root stimulators are fertilizers that contain lower amounts of nitrogen, higher amounts of phosphorous, and lower amount of potassium, plus a rooting hormone. Using a root stimulator can easily save weeks in establishing a new tree and will greatly improve the trees vigor and overall health. After your tree is established choose a fertilizer for growth. This fertilizer will contain higher amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium and always buy fertilizers with trace minerals, also called minors. (example: 18-8-8 plus minors).

Shearing Leyland Cypress is easy and an excellent way to control the trees size. For a formal hedge start shearing when the tree reaches 3 or 4 feet in height, cutting only the sides, remove no more than 3 or 4 inches of growth. This will cause the tree to grow thicker. If you want the tree to grow tall don't cut the top leader, just shape the sides. The best time to shear is after a new growth spurt finishes and the new growth begins to mature. Growth will go from a smooth, greasy texture, to a more rough snake skin look. Shearing twice a year is sufficient. To keep your trees at a particular height requires cutting the central leader and then shearing all outside branches. this will control the tree for many years, but in time the tree will become to large to maintain. After shearing its wise to spray your trees with a fungicide every 7 to 10 days for at least 6 weeks. The reason for this is conifers produce much of there food in strong, active growing tips. Shearing temporarily reduces the amount of food being produced, weakening the tree, this could result in a fungal infection. The old adage is an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Use Kocide 2000. (active ingredient, copper hydroxide)

Insect problems with Leyland Cypress - Leyland Cypress only have a few insects that cause any real problems. Bagworms are probably the worst, on small trees Bagworms can be picked by hand but larger trees need to be sprayed. Dimethoate which sells under the trade name Cygon, works well when applied in the first 3 months of spring, when the larvae are small and before they produce bags. After they produce bags they are very difficult to control with chemicals. Scale is another insect that attacks Leylands, they look like little crusty flakes covering the needles and branches. Scale feed on sap causing a chlorosis (yellow) look to the needles. Cygon is a systemic insecticide that is very effective aganist scale. Systemic means it enters into the tree, the scale feed on the sap and dies. As with Bagworms, spring is a good time to spray for prevention. The most difficult insect to control on Leylands is Spider Mites. These are very small insects that can be seen with a magnifying glass. Feeding on the sap needles turn yellow and later brown. Spidermite have become resistant to most of the old chemicals. Recommend using only true miticides for control.

Diseases Of Leyland Cypress There are only four main diseases of Leyland Cypress, Seiridium canker or stem canker, causes branches and entire trees to die. No effective chemical control available. A mixture of Zertol and Daconil may help. Botryosphaeria canker is similar to Seiridium

canker causes entire branches to die. No effective chemical control available, a mixture of Zeritol and Daconil may help. Cercosporidium Blight is a very aggressive fungi. Spores are airborne and travel very fast. Needles turn yellow and drop, usually starting on lower branches, starting from the inside and progressing outward and upward. Kocide 2000 works well at controlling this fungi. Using Zertol in a rotation with Kocide 2000 can be curative. Cercosporidium usually attacks trees that have been stressed from shearing, drought, lack of fertilizer, and hot sun. It almost always starts on the sunny side of the tree. The last disease is Phytophthora root rot. This disease occurs with trees having poor drainage, or that have been over watered, and is not generally a large problem. Zertol is very effective. Zeritol is available online or can be ordered thru your local nursery. However the smallest size available is in 2 1/2 gallon containers of concentrate making between 400 to 1280 gallons of finished solution. Zertol in concentrated form is a very corrosive oxidizer, carrying haz-mat warnings. As with all chemicals read and follow all instructions.

This tree is a hybrid of Monterey cypress and Alaskan cedar. Six seedlings were discovered in 1888 by C.J. Leyland at Leighton Hall in the South of Wales. The two parent trees were growing on the Leighton Hall Estate and cross bred purely by accident. Mr. Leyland continued to develop the trees with the assistance of his nephew J.M. Naylor during the early 1900's. In 1941, rooted cuttings arrived in United States, through California, for the first time. In 1965, they found their way to Clemson University in South Carolina where their use as Christmas trees became apparent.

In England, the Leyland cypress is used as an ornamental and as a wind break. In New Zealand and Australia, it is used for wood products. In the United States, it has become a valued landscape plant and one of the most sought after Christmas trees.

This stately beauty is a sterile hybrid and must be propagated by individual cutting. Leylands are aggressive plants. They secrete a natural herbicide from their roots to reduce the competition from surrounding vegetation. In its mature form, heights of 138' are expected, and the tree is capable of withstanding temperatures of about 0 F.

The bark of the Leyland cypress is characterized by a skin-like texture. It is quite delicate. Care should be exercised to ensure that it does not tear while being cut.

An Allergy-Free Christmas Tree?

"Christmas tree asthma" causes coughing and wheezing and can ruin Christmas for those affected. For years this problem along with associated nasal congestion and sneezing were thought to be caused by molds growing on the Christmas tree. New research, however, indicates the real culprits are oleoresins produced by the tree itself. Ironically, it is these same oleoresins that give Christmas trees their pleasant Christmas smell.

Well, now there's hope for allergy sufferers who want to enjoy the warmth and beauty of a real Christmas tree.

Leyland cypress seems to cause little, if any, problems for those with allergies.

Baton Rouge allergy specialist Dr. A. C. Dalton, supports this observation. After hearing talk about Leyland cypress, he put one in his office. For about a week he kept it outside on the porch, afraid to force it on his patients. But when none of his patients objected and many told him they already used a Leyland, he moved it into his waiting room.

Now Dr. Dalton enthusiastically endorses Leyland cypress. He's used one in his office for the past three years and has yet to receive a complaint.

As Christmas Trees.

The Leland Cypress is an excellent choice for a living Christmas tree which should provide beauty for years to come. Even though the Leland Cypress does have the "Cypress" name, it is similar to a juniper bush than a Bald Cypress tree. It should be planted in a full sun location and will require about the same care a juniper does -- very little! Plant it as soon after the Christmas holidays as you can so it can establish a root system before spring growth begins. DO NOT let the root ball dry during its stay in the house. Dead trees do not grow well even if they are planted outside.

They don't aggravate allergies, the only way they can be propagated is through cuttings and they don't shed or get prickly. Everybody wants that soft tree that's not sticky.

Privacy Screens

Leyland Cypress is hardy to Zone 6. It is a pyramidal tree, to 30-40 feet tall and 25 to 30 feet wide which makes it good for tall screen. It is graceful, somewhat open habit of growth. Give ample room, to allow for symmetry of growth. It grows well in a variety of soils, but prefers good drainage.

Hedges

The Leyland cypress is widely used as a quick growing hedge. Plant 4 to 10 feet apart, depending upon your desired results.