



Monterey Cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*)



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Summary:

The Monterey Cypress is an evergreen tree widely found on the California coast. It has two natural stands in Monterey County between Point Cypress and Pescadero, then another near Point Lobos. Naturalists at the Point Lobos State Reserve have estimated the maximum age of Monterey cypress at 200 to 300 years. It has now been planted in Hawaii, Europe, South America, Australia, and New Zealand. In sea bluffs you'll typically find Monterey Cypress integrated with Monterey Pine.

The shape of these trees can be described as sculptured and distorted due to their exposure to nearly constant onshore winds. They can grow up to 82 feet in height, their leaves are about 0.08 inch, and the cones can be up to 1.4 inches long. It has a thick fibrous bark and it begins to furrow as it ages. In their environment they have grown in a rocky granite soil and have a well-defined taproot and numerous laterals that form in the first year. Monterey cypress reproduces exclusively from seed, dispersed by wind and rain. The Monterey Cypress is susceptible to one species of bark beetle (*Ernobius conicola*) which infests green and dry cones and dead branches.

Fire effects:

Monterey cypress is capable of seedling establishment with or without crown fire, although fire provides optimum site conditions for regeneration. Monterey cypress is a fire-adapted species with serotinous cones. Serotinous cones meaning late in developing, opening, or blooming. Most seed falls in the first few months following fires that occur in late summer and fall and are followed by winter rains, so we have nutrient soil and water to provide an ideal environment for seed germination. The wood is durable and develops a large proportion of heartwood, which splits well, dries quickly, and is clean burning.



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