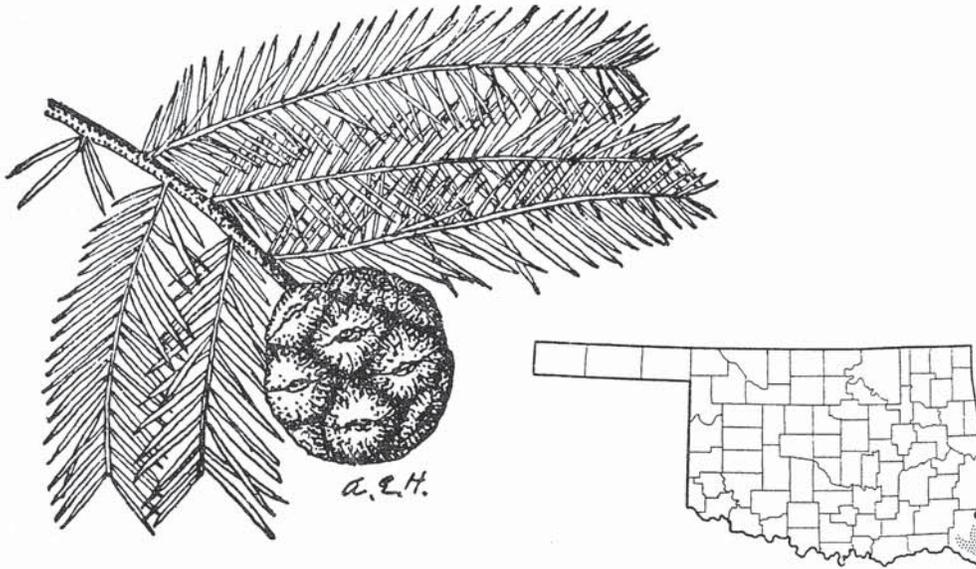


7. BALDCYPRESS

Taxodium distichum (L.) Rich.; cypress.

Large needleleaf deciduous, cone-bearing tree 80-100 ft (24-30 m) high, with long straight trunk 2-5 ft (0.6-1.5 m) in diameter, much enlarged and buttressed at base, often angled and with cone-shaped "knees" from submerged roots. Crown broad, short, thin, flattened at top or on small and planted trees conical and pointed. Twigs very slender, flat, green, with tiny brown pith. Buds tiny, rounded, with few scales.



Needles crowded *featherlike*, single or alternate in 2 rows, flat, $\frac{3}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ in (1-2 cm) long, soft and flexible, *dull light green*, whitish beneath, turning brown and *shedding with twig in autumn*.

Cones 1 or 2 at end of twig, *round*, $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 in (2-2.5 cm) in diameter, gray. Cone-scales several, flattened, 4-angled, hard, *shedding* separately at maturity. **Seeds** 2 at base of cone-scale, nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6 mm) long, brown, 3-angled and slightly 3-winged.

Bark brown, with long narrow fibrous ridges, peeling off in strips.

Wood light yellowish or reddish brown with narrow whitish sapwood, nonporous, coarse-textured, moderately heavy (sp. gr. 42), moderately hard and strong, often with rancid odor, and decay-resistant or durable. Principal uses are building and heavy construction, including warehouses, docks, and bridges, general millwork, boxes and crates, caskets, interior trim, paneling, sliding tanks, and boats. However the supply in Okla. is limited.

Common and dominant in baldcypress forests in wet soils bordering streams and lakes along Little River and tributaries, mostly in Coastal Plain, confined to McCurtain Co., se. Okla.; introduced northward. Coastal Plain of se. U.S. from s. Del. to s. Fla. and s. Tex. and n. in Miss. Valley to sw. Ind. Zone 5.

Baldcypress is a handsome large shade and ornamental tree introduced northward in Okla., not only along lakes but in drier upland soils of cities. However, the distinctive "knees" are absent away from water. State tree of La.

The largest tree in Oklahoma formerly was a baldcypress located w. of Mountain Fork River about 7 mi. e. of Broken Bow, a short distance n. of U. S. Highway 70. In 1979, the dimensions were 118 ft (36 m) in height, 97 ft 6 in (29.6 m) in crown spread, and 32 ft 4½ in (9.9 m) in trunk circumference (approximately 10 ft 4 in or 3.1 m in diameter). The tree was damaged and partially burned by a lightning strike in the early 1980s. Although now dead, the trunk is still an impressive sight. An admission charge is made to see this tree and a small Choctaw Indian museum nearby.