

False Cypress—*Chamaecyparis*

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The genus *Chamaecyparis* is a group of evergreen conifers native to East Asia or North America. The American species include *C. lawsoniana* (not reliably hardy in Newfoundland), *C. nootkatensis* and *C. thyoides*. From Asia come the *C. pisifera* and *C. obtusa* species. False cypress has been grown as a garden ornamental for over a hundred years. Over that time, there have been many horticultural selections made which vary tremendously in size, form and foliage colour.

With the exception of *C. lawsoniana*, the others mentioned are hardy through zone 5 but still benefit from a site sheltered from excess wind. Dwarf forms are prone to being flattened by heavy snow so some winter protection is advised. Full sun is best but green forms are fine for part shade.



Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Chabo Yadori'

This group of evergreens lend themselves beautifully to annual shearing. This will keep dwarf forms compact and taller forms more dense. Generally, shearing takes place in mid-summer

The Nootka False Cypress (*C. nootkatensis*) is most well known in its



Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Plumosa Aurea Nana'

'Pendula' form which resembles an upright tree with strongly weeping branches. Not unlike something that would be seen in a Dr. Seuss book! Architecturally it is an outstanding landscape tree.

Although White False Cypress (*C. thyoides*) is not grown much locally, in the Garden we grow the dwarf form called 'Heatherbun'. It can eventually reach 6 feet but is easily pruned to keep it compact and round in form. The foliage is grey-green in summer but turns purple-grey in winter. We sometimes offer this one in the FOG plant sales.

Lawson's false cypress (*C. lawsoniana*) is an outstanding species as well, very popular in west coast gardens. They are borderline hardy in St. John's but dwarf forms, such as 'Green Globe'

seem to do reasonably well in our area as well.



*Chamaecyparis
pisifera* 'Sungold'

There are literally hundreds of selections made from the Sawara cypress (*C. pisifera*) and Hinoki cypress (*C. obtusa*).

These are popular subjects

for bonsai as many are naturally dwarf and irregular in form. Meanwhile, some are pyramidal while others are rounded and weeping, especially the thread-leaf forms of *C. pisifera*. Many of the most popular selections have grayish or yellow foliage. We grow several of these false cypress in the



Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Plumosa Flavescens'

Garden including *C. obtusa* 'Coralliformis', *C. obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis', *C. pisifera* 'Squarrosa Intermedia', *C. pisifera* 'Squarrosa Mikko' and *C. pisifera* 'Golden Mop'. These selections often appear at FOG plant sales.