

# PLANT HEALTH CARE REPORT



## Italian Cypress

Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) is a large, columnar-shaped tree widely planted in western landscapes. Native to Europe and Asia, it usually grows 30 to 40 feet high but seldom exceeds 10 feet in width. Because of its unique shape, Italian cypress is primarily planted as an accent plant. Its compact growth habit makes it ideal for lining driveways and entryways, softening tall buildings, and gracing formal gardens.



Italian cypress is well adapted to hot, dry climates. Drought tolerance makes it suitable for use in areas that receive little rainfall or in landscapes without irrigation. It requires full sun and well-drained soil. Shading, excessive irrigation, and poor soil drainage account for many of the pest and other problems that plague Italian cypress. Besides removal of dead branches or errant branches that occasionally protrude from the crown, Italian cypress has minimal pruning requirements.

As with most conifers, Italian cypress is sensitive to root collar disorders. Soil or mulch on the root collar or against the stem can impede establishment of new plantings and predispose them to girdling roots and diseases. The most serious disease resulting from root disorders and poor soil conditions is Phytophthora root disease. Careful monitoring of irrigation systems to prevent excess soil moisture is vital to preventing this disease. During years of heavy rainfall, or where irrigation is excessive, preventive soil treatments may be necessary.

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Various twig and branch canker fungi, which cause sporadic dieback, affect Italian cypress. These diseases are most prevalent when the tree is grown in partial shade, stressed by low temperatures, in regions with high humidity, or when root collar disorders are present.

Spider mites, certain scale insects, and bagworms may reach damaging levels on Italian cypress. Regular monitoring and treatments are needed to maintain plant health.

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## Monitoring and Treatment Considerations for Italian Cypress

### Late winter

Monitor for spruce spider mite; treat as needed. Expose and inspect root collar for problems. Add mulch as necessary. Remove dead, dying, diseased, and broken branches. Prune to improve form and appearance. Sample soil for nutrient and pH levels. Submit root samples for Phytophthora testing if plants exhibit decline.

### Early spring

Apply soil treatment to suppress Phytophthora root disease as needed. Monitor for spruce spider mite; treat as needed. Fertilize, adjust pH, and amend soil according to soil analysis.

### Late spring

Monitor for spider mites and bagworms; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture levels to prevent root disease.

### Early summer

Apply fungicide treatment to suppress twig blight. Monitor for spider mites and bagworms; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture levels to prevent root disease.

### Midsummer

Repeat soil treatment to suppress Phytophthora root disease as needed. Repeat fungicide treatments for twig blight as needed. Monitor for spider mites and bagworms; treat as needed. Inspect for canker diseases and remove infected branches and twigs.

### Late summer

Repeat treatment for twig blight as needed. Monitor for spider mites; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to prevent root disease.

### Fall

Repeat soil treatment to suppress Phytophthora root disease as needed. Monitor for spider mites; treat as needed.

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