

# OTHER NAMES

- » Southern Cypress
- » Swamp Cypress
- » Red Cypress
- » Yellow Cypress
- » White Cypress
- » Tidewater Red Cypress
- » Gulf Cypress

# FUN FACTS

- » State tree of Louisiana.
- » Can grow up to 150ft tall, 25ft wide and can typically live for over 600 years with the oldest known to be 2,625 years old.
- » As a deciduous conifer it is one of the few cone-bearing plants that loses its needles in the fall.
- » No scientific consensus on function of "knees" of Bald Cypress.
- » This species has been planted as a water tolerant tree species used for shading and canopy closure in mosquito control programs.

# CONSERVATION

- » Although not a threatened species, the Bald Cypress is an integral part of the wetland ecology in southeast Louisiana and protecting it is paramount to the economic and environmental sustainability to the region
- » Jefferson Parish and passionate volunteers engage in local tree planting initiatives utilizing tree guards to protect against Nutria.



Stay up-to-date about upcoming events and information at:

[www.jeffparish.net/coastal](http://www.jeffparish.net/coastal)  
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# BALD CYPRESS

(*Taxodium distichum*) in Southeast Louisiana





NUTRIA TREE GUARDS

# CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- » Historically used for lumber and making furniture, because it has powerful anti-fungal properties. The wood is also strong and heavy making it great for outdoor construction as it is resistant to shrinkage, rotting and termites. It is used for building beams, posts, docks, bridges, and other structural aspects of heavy construction.
- » Native American tribes used the Bald Cypress mainly for its wood and fiber. Many of these cultures used the cypress to create dugout canoes, houses, cooking tools, toys and drums.
- » The Bald Cypress is a beautiful tree that has inspired many works of art, poetry and prose over the centuries including works by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and John Muir.

# RANGE & HABITAT

- » Gulf and Southeastern coasts and up the Mississippi Valley.
- » Grows in an assortment of soils.
- » Adapted to moist, hot and humid climates.
- » Well-adapted to wet conditions along riverbanks and swamps and can withstand flooding.

# ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

- » Bald Cypress trees provide habitat for many animals. Frogs, toads, and salamanders use bald cypress swamps as breeding grounds. Waterfowl nest and catfish spawn in hollow trunks, and raptors, including Bald Eagles, nest in the treetops.
- » They reduce damage from floods as they cause floodwaters to spread out, slow down, and infiltrate the soil, recharging the groundwater.
- » Bald Cypress swamps prevent erosion and act as sediment and pollutant traps which improve local water quality.

# NATURAL HISTORY

- » Seeds are produced annually and good seed production occurs about every 3 years. Soil saturated for 1 to 3 months after seed fall is required for germination.
- » Leaves from the Bald Cypress turn a wonderful rust to orange color in the fall prior to dropping, where they provide a fine-textured natural mulch and serve as protection for a host of wildlife.
- » Thin and fibrous bark with an interwoven pattern of narrow flat ridges and narrow furrows which has a shedding appearance in colors ranging from tan-gray to orange-red.
- » Often has cone-shaped "knees" emerging from roots of the tree if growing in water.
- » Grows 13–24" per year. Its trunk is massive, tapered and buttressed. It develops a taproot as well as horizontal roots that lie just below the surface and extend out 20 to 50 feet.

# THREATS

- » Nutria often clip or uproot newly planted seedlings before the root systems are established.
- » Logging, increased nutrients, pollution from agricultural runoff, and invasion of exotic species.
- » Invasive species threaten native species through competition for light, nutrients, and space. This compromises the natural ecology of the area.

