UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

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Juniperus deppeana 'Mcfetter': McFetter Alligator Juniper[1]

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Introduction

This native North American evergreen tree found in the southwestern United States reaches 50 to 60 feet in height and forms a broad, pyramidal or rounded canopy. The crown probably spreads to about 20 or 25 feet. The trunk is normally rather short and covered with brown, scaly bark. The foliage has a rich blue coloration which stands out in the landscape against any background.



Figure 1. Mature *Juniperus deppeana* 'Mcfetter': McFetter Alligator Juniper
Credit: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Juniperus deppeana*

Pronunciation: joo-NIP-er-us depp-ee-AY-nuh

Common name(s): McFetter alligator juniper

Family: *Cupressaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7A through 9B (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: hedge; screen; reclamation; specimen; highway median; Bonsai

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 50 to 60 feet

Spread: 20 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: oval, columnar

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

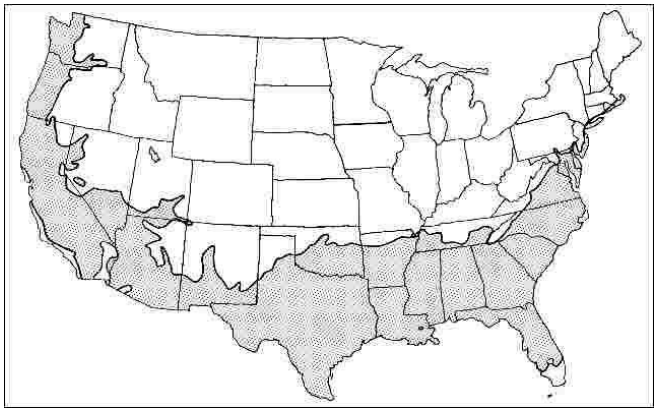

Figure 2. Range

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: scale-like

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, fragrant

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: unknown

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: cone, round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green, brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Mcfetter alligator juniper can be used as leyland cypress has been. Plant it on 15 to 20 foot centers to form a solid blue screen. Growth rate is rapid in full sun.

Mcfetter alligator juniper is grown in full sun on well-drained, slightly acid soil. It appears to perform well on clay soils and should be suited for many areas of the southern United States.

Pests

No pests are of major concern at this time. However, the plant has not been grown in the east for very long.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern at this time.

[1] This document is ENH-482, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture Department. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication. © UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/*.

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