

Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

The Arborvitae is a slender evergreen tree in the Cupressaceae (cypress) family native to eastern North America. They typically grow 40 to 60 feet tall and have a spread of 10 -15 feet.

The Arborvitae is a low maintenance plant that tolerates clay soil, wet sites, black walnut, and air pollution. It grows best in moist, neutral to alkaline, well-drained loams. It does not tolerate dry sites, and exposed windy sites should be avoided. Also avoid full shade, or foliage will thin out dramatically. Cultivars are typically globular, pyramidal, columnar to conical in growth form. These trees are utilized as specimens, accents, hedges, or foundation plants.

This tree is more or less a large shrub. It is commonly used to block views so it would block line of sight, if it were used near traffic. In olden times, when explorers explored new lands they brought back plant specimens. While a crew was returning from the New World they became sick with scurvy, so they made a tea from some of the *Thuja* foliage. The crew was saved so they named this plant Arborvitae, Arbor means tree and vitae means life.