

Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*)

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It's holiday time, which makes me think Conifers. A sturdy tree for our climate that also is a WaterWise garden choice is the incense cedar, *Calocedrus decurrens*. Its pleasant odor when the leaves are crushed is certainly appropriate for the season.

Although not a true cedar, the foliage and form certainly makes us think it is one. Light or reddish bark and a majestic and tall profile add to its appeal. Although it can grow to 100 feet tall, most trees in cultivation do not reach this height. The lush green foliage holds its color well throughout the winter. I've seen a lot of these planted in parks as well as by residences and they seem to perform well in both locations.

Perhaps that is because incense cedar is also a Pacific Northwest native plant with a distribution from Oregon and Nevada into California, mostly at higher elevations. Its beauty and a picture of the cone that allows us to identify it more easily are shown in the photographs from the OSU Plant Identification site at <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/>, which you can consult for more information and photographs.

