



SARATOGA HORTICULTURAL FOUNDATION, INC.

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Sequoia sempervirens

The magnificent Coast Redwoods are such a part of our everyday environment that they require no generalised description. Where they occur in virgin stands they are amongst the tallest trees on earth and reach such an incredible size that they can only be described as awesome. However we should not lose sight of the fact that in cultivation they are also a rapidly growing and decorative tree. This of course has been widely recognised, as is evidenced by their extensive use in gardens, parks, business and industrial situations and freeway plantings - both as screens and as individual specimens.

The chief problem, associated with the planting of Redwoods in the landscape, is the great variability which occurs in both the habit and colour of the foliage in any crop of seedlings. This unfortunately therefore provides no guarantees in a landscape plan - as such a great proportion of any population of this species will develop with a mediocre or poor shape, and are uninteresting or dull in their foliage characteristics.

However it has been possible, for the last decade, to obtain vegetatively propagated trees of selected clones. These have been selected for vigour; for a full, erect and symmetrical habit; for interesting and colourful foliage; for an adequate degree of hardiness and a lack of winter browning.

The first selections to be grown in any considerable quantity were made by Mr. Charles Samms of the Beeline Nursery in Aptos. Further selections have also been made by the Foundation and others, of these SHF is now growing five cultivars which have stood the test of a limited passage of time and show characteristics which are worthy of use:-

'Aptos Blue' - an upright growing tree with a horizontal branching habit, the branches tending to be in whorls and with the small side branchlets developing a weeping character. The foliage is heavy in texture and a dark bluish-green in colour.

- a Charles Samms introduction.

'Filoli' - a highly glaucous form with the foliage colour of a Koster's Blue Spruce. In habit it will most probably develop a number of subterminal leaders and is tedious to

try and train into a well shaped specimen; it is probable that this variety, which has such exceptional colour, is best suited for use as a sheared hedge. This clone tends to cone even on very small plants but does not seem to detract from its vigour.

- of an uncertain origin but appears to be the same plant which has been distributed as 'Henderson's Blue'.

'Los Altos' - an evenly branched tree with a broadly pyramidal shape and a semi-open habit, which reveals the straight cinnamon-brown trunk. This is a fast growing tree with a hard glossy foliage. The leaves are a dark green on the upper surface and have a grey bloom underneath. A good, strong growing tree of vigorous constitution.

- an SHF introduction.

'Santa Cruz' - a full, dense tree with an ascending habit to the side branches. This tree produces an abundance of pale green foliage which gives it a very light and airy character. The chief limitation to this clone is that it has proved to show a lesser tolerance of frost so that it is really only suitable for use in coastal areas.

- a Charles Samms introduction.

'Soquel' - a very symmetrical tree with its branches growing horizontally or slightly downward and then arching up in a particularly graceful manner. It is a strong, upright growing tree but is distinctly slower growing tree than the others listed. This variety has soft, silky foliage with a feathery texture and a delicate mid-green colour.

- a Charles Samms introduction.

Although these trees can be grown as single specimens it is prudent to recollect, that in nature, these plants occur in closely spaced groves and that for landscape use they will look well if grown in clumps of three or five which, for reasons of artistic integrity, should probably be of the same cultivar.

Tree; evergreen; native.