

THE AUSTRALIAN BLUE CYPRESS STORY

Callitris intratropica

Known commonly as Blue Cypress, Cypress Pine, Cypress Pine, Northern Australian Cypress Pine, Northern Xmas Tree

The Blue Cypress pine is native to Northern Australia and grows in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Cape York and northeast Queensland.

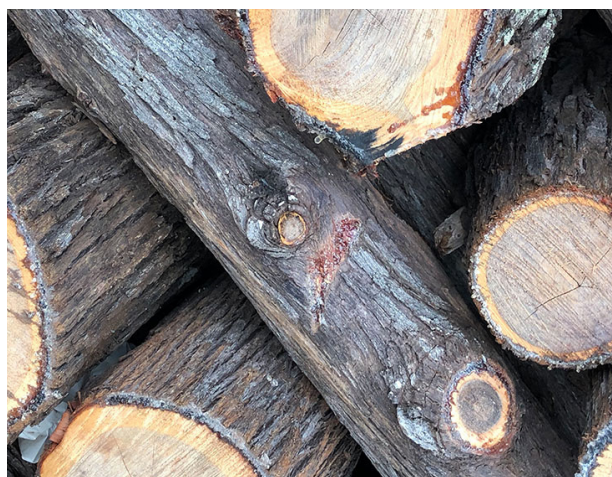
It is a small to medium conifer that is slow growing, general reaching 20-30 metres high, with blue-green to dark green foliage. The timber is very aromatic and naturally resistant to termites.

BOTANY HISTORY

The Cypress Pine can grow for over 200 years making it a very long-lived tree. The first recorded use of Blue Cypress by European settlers was in 1905 by Mr. Joe Cooper, who cut it for construction timber. During this time economic botanist, R. T. Baker and essential chemist, H. G. Smith, were preparing their botanical reference 'A Research on the Pines of Australia' where among others, the characteristics and properties of *Callitris intratropica* were investigated and defined.

Being naturally resistant to termites, blue cypress proved very popular in Northern Australia as a construction timber. With the first plantations being established on Melville Island in the early 1960s and across the Northern Territory in subsequent years.

However, after Cyclone Tracey devastated Darwin – capitol of the Northern Territory - in 1974, new building codes were established that discouraged the building of timber-framed houses.



In the late 1970s the Federal government cut funding for timber plantations in the Northern Territory, bringing the plantation scheme to an end.

Fortunately, by the mid-1990s, blue cypress oil began to gain recognition for its fragrance compounds and the remaining Northern Territory plantations were made available to essential oil producers.

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INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Aboriginal names: laguni (Waguni people), Kamtirrikani (Tiwi people)

For thousands of years, the Australian Aboriginals have utilized the medicinal properties of Australia's native plants. With plants rich in the essential oils forming a major part of their medicine chest. With traditional practitioners inhaling the vapours of the plant by hand crushing them or by placing them on hot stones.

Similar processes were used to make healing poultices, utilizing the plant's natural anti-inflammatory properties. And oils were extracted through boiling plant matter to create soothing body oil. The bark could also be thrown into the fire, acting as an insect repellent.

PROCESS

One of the most striking characteristics of blue cypress oil is surely its colouring.

Wild Wood Oils of Australia's harvest logs and branches from plantation grown trees. As part of the extraction process, the bark and heartwood are reduced to shavings/chips and steam distilled over 48 hours. Yielding about 1-2% of beautifully smooth, blue-green oil with a fresh foresty aroma.

100% Blue Cypress essential oil is quite viscous and may be slow to pour. When the oil is cold, it will form tiny crystals. This does not affect the quality of the oil and with gentle warming, the crystals will disappear.



THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES

Blue Cypress oil is rich in sesquiterpenes, including guaiazulene, which gives it useful anti-inflammatory properties. It is also known to have anti-bacterial and some anti-viral properties.

Blue cypress oil also improves circulation, assisting with cramps, body aches and pains.

It has many uses as an essential oil, in cosmetics and pharmaceutical applications.

All essential oils, including Blue Cypress, are not recommended to be applied directly on the skin unless diluted.

AROMATHERAPY

Australian Blue Cypress essential oil is a pleasant, calming and grounding oil, able to assist in times of stress. It is also good for tired joints and muscles.

With a pleasant woody scent, well suited to both men and women.

As a fragrance, blue cypress essential oil blends well with citrus oils like lemon, lime and wild orange.

As well as other pure oils such as bergamot, clary sage, frankincense, juniper berry, lavender, marjoram, rosemary and sandalwood essential oils for diffusion.