

Botanical Bits September 2003

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This Juniper is Taylor Made for Nebraska

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To our pleasure (and sometimes to our chagrin), nature allows for plants to multiply. Nature also allows for plants to change. It allows for the introduction of variations due to genetic and environmental factors.

This natural variation was at work near the town of Taylor, Neb., where a unique variation of the Eastern redcedar was discovered in 1978. This Taylor-made version was a narrow upright tree 25 feet tall and 3 feet wide and much more refined than the broadly pyramidal and irregular shape of its species. It surely must have dressed up the grasslands of central Nebraska with its formal columnar shape, more suited to a French garden than a prairie.

The qualities of *Juniperus virginiana* "Taylor" do not stop with its growth habit. It has been found to be disease resistant and tolerant of a wide variety of soil and environmental conditions. These attributes give it great value as a landscape plant.

The Taylor juniper can be used as a sentinel to a doorway or as an effective and orderly screen or border. It can add a vertical element to the horizontal facade of a building. Taylor is comfortable in tough urban sites such as narrow planting beds next to brick walls and concrete. Plant it with a mass of native grass at its feet and these grassland companions take on the appeal of the country, providing a lovely winter display and cozy cover for wildlife.

Variation in the plant community often leads to hardy plants and a diverse and sustainable landscape. It led to the uniquely Nebraska, Taylor juniper. The use of Taylor in the ornamental landscape celebrates the variety to be found in the plant communities of the Great Plains.

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum introduced the Taylor juniper to the ornamental plant industry as part of its plant introduction program in 1992.

The arboretum, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2004, is headquartered in the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



The Taylor juniper is a versatile evergreen, ideal as both a specimen plant or, as shown here, a tall hedge.

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