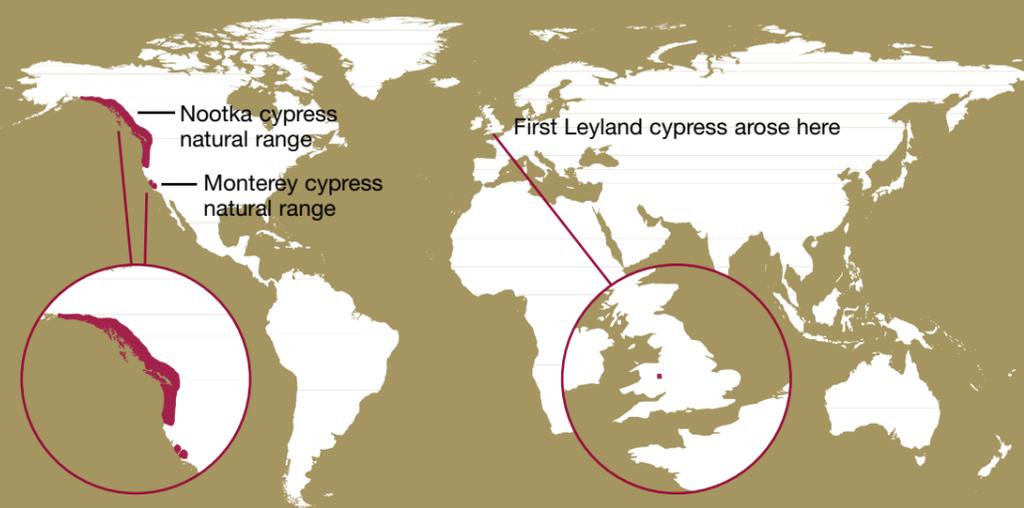


Leyland cypress X *Cuprocyparis leylandii**

*The X in front of the scientific name tells you that the tree is a hybrid. There is currently some interesting discussion about the correct scientific name of this tree, so watch this space...

This tree is one of the earliest Leyland cypresses, growing on the Welsh estate where it all began.



This map shows the separate natural ranges of the 'parent' trees (Nootka cypress and Monterey cypress) and the UK location of the first hybrid between the two; the tree we know today as a Leyland cypress.

Lawson cypress



Leyland cypress



Leyland cypress foliage



illustrations by John White

Lawson and Leyland cypresses can be hard to tell apart. The Leyland cypress has more of a compact, column shape than the Lawson cypress, with branches that do not droop. It also has bigger cones.

Man-made monster - or just misunderstood?

The Leyland cypress is not found in the wild. It first occurred because two trees that normally grow thousands of miles apart were planted close together on an estate in Wales. The resulting hybrid grew faster and was tougher than either 'parent' tree. Enter the infamous Leyland cypress...

These trees are commonly planted in gardens to provide a quick boundary. It's a bad choice though – Leyland cypresses grow very fast and can cut out a lot of light. This has caused some high-profile disputes between neighbours which, in one case, even led to murder.

Bedgebury has the NCCPG (National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens) National Collection of Leyland cypresses, a comprehensive 'living gene bank' containing most of the known cultivars. The collection protects rare cultivars from extinction and is also a useful resource for gardeners.

Did you know?

These three Leyland cypresses are some of the finest examples you are likely to see. However, it's easy to see why people have problems with them in gardens – they need room!