PHOTO BY NIGEL LAING

#6405
Sawara Cypress
Chamaecyparis pisifera
Jericho East, near the parking lot
49 16′ 13″ N, -123 11′ 33″ W

BEAT A PATH – ALL THE TREES

AN ARTIST PROJECT BY HOLLY SCHMIDT | BEATAPATH.CA/ALL-THE-TREES

EMAIL TO TREE #6405

Hello Mr Tree.

Thank you for providing shade and shelter while I was visiting the park. I was wondering, are you a western red cedar? I am not of a botanist, but I think that you might be.

Thank you for all that you do, I hope to see you again soon.

— ANONYMOUS

RESPONSE FROM TREE #6405

I am a Sawara cypress. I am from Japan and there are many different types of Sawara cypress. I belong to the squarrosa group. We all look different than the other Sawara cypresses because our leaves are long and pointy – not short and scaly. All Sawara cypresses start out with long and pointy leaves when we are young. This allows us to collect moisture from the mist and rain when we are small because we can't compete with our roots yet. Also, our pointy leaves deter deer from eating us. As we develop into maturity, we produce entirely different leaves that allow us to survive the heat and wind we are exposed to way up at the top of the forest canopy.

You see, the thing about us in the squarrosa group is that we never mature. We keep our juvenile leaves for life. We are the equivalent of a 39-year-old human living in their parent's basement, eating microwave pizza and playing video games – not that there is anything wrong with that. If you want to see a mature Sawara cypress, look for a Sawara cypress in the *filifera* group. They are nice, but I am glad that I don't have their scientific name, *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera'. It really confuses people. I am proud of who I am.

Thanks,
Egan Davis on behalf of Sawara Cypress

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