

Medora Juniper

By Donald G. Hoag¹

A limited number of specimens of Medora juniper, a new clone of Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* Sarg.), will be

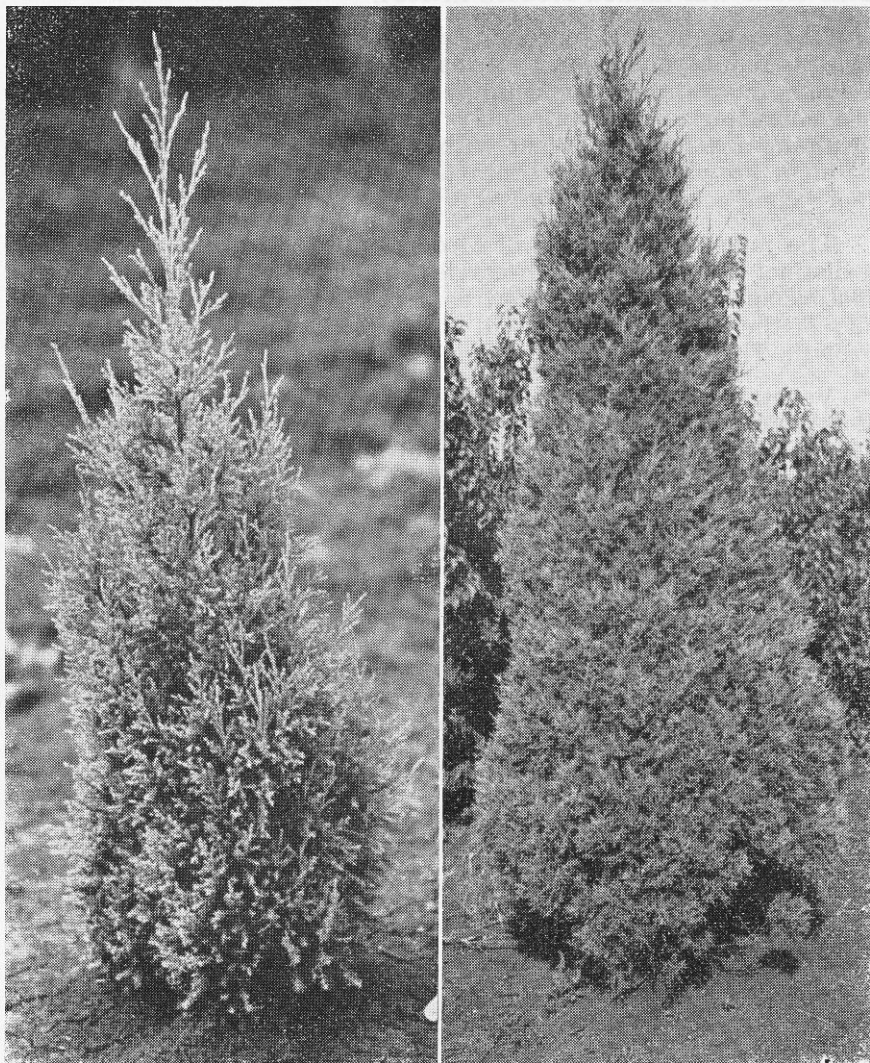


FIGURE 1.—Left, *Medora juniper* photographed in 1942. The tree was 2½ feet high by 1 foot wide at the broadest part.

FIGURE 2.—Right, original specimen of *Medora juniper* photographed September 1956. Seventeen years after planting, the tree is approximately 9 feet tall by 36 inches wide.

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made available for trial plantings during the 1957 growing season. Medora juniper originated in a block of unselected juniper seedlings received from John Gerbracht of Hettinger, North Dakota, and planted by the Horticulture Department², North Dakota Agricultural College in 1939. The distinctive growth habit of one plant was noted by 1942 and the plant was assigned the number ND 1. This clone was named Medora in 1954.

Medora juniper is representative of a distinctive type of Rocky Mountain juniper native in a restricted area near Amidon, North Dakota, in western Slope county. In this area many of the junipers are characterized by extremely slender, columnar growth, often attaining a height of 30 feet with a spread of 36 to 48 inches. The habit of growth of the Medora juniper is distinctly columnar but more compact than the native types.

The juvenile specimens of Medora juniper are distinguished by a distinct blue color, which carries through on the new growth of mature specimens giving the tree a definite blue-green cast. Intensity of the blue coloration will vary with the vigor of the current growth. The clone is staminate and consequently produces no fruit.

Vegetative propagation of the clone Medora has indicated that it is difficult to root as cuttings, but when grafted on seedling rootstocks yields a plant immediately distinctive in growth habit. Without the benefit of pruning or trimming, the newly propagated plants are slender and compact. The compact growth habit has been maintained throughout the life of the original specimen (fig. 2) without pruning.

The compact, columnar habit of Medora juniper makes it desirable for use in the landscape plan wherever a vertical accent is needed. The compactness of growth makes this clone of value for foundation plantings, where it can be expected to remain within bounds without pruning or shearing—a characteristic to be desired by homeowners in need of landscape material requiring a minimum of maintenance.

A restricted number of plants of the Medora juniper are being made available to experiment stations and similar institutions. Scion material is available to commercial propagators. The relatively expensive propagation of junipers precludes general distribution of Medora juniper.

²Early selection and preservation of the clone was accomplished by Harry Graves, Extension Service Horticulturist and Ole Grotodden, formerly of this department.