

BEYOND THE BINARY

III



EASTERN
RED CEDAR

Eastern
red cedar
is **native**
to the
Great
Plains.



For thousands of years, Indigenous
peoples set the prairie fires
that kept it in check.



When European
settlers sup-
pressed those
fires, cedar
began to
spread.

After the Dust
Bowl, our
government
encouraged
planting it as
windbreaks,
and within
decades, it
was everywhere.

In Oklahoma
alone, eastern
red cedar
spreads across
300,000 new
acres each
year.

This native
plant did not
change.

The
context
did.

Invasive growth is often
a symptom of environ-
mental disturbance,
rather than the cause,
and serves to notify us
of an ecosystem out
of balance.



2026



SOURCES

Cedar converts
grassland to
woodland,
blocking light
and drinking up
a massive
amount of
groundwater...

... fundamentally
changing the
landscape
from how it
looked in
1492.

