

Your Landscaping Questions Answered

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Question: Our garden looks very colorful with roses, flowering trees & shrubs in spring summer & fall, but looks bare in the winter months. How to prevent that?



Evergreens & Azalea borders- as Privacy screens



Evergreen Mugo Pines as backdrop to Perennials

Residential Landscapes-Designed by Manjula & Jerry Juluri, in Chicago suburbs-

Answer: Evergreen trees are extremely valuable in your yard as they have special leaves that resist cold and moisture loss in the winter landscape. Unlike deciduous Trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials, the landscape evergreens, also known as conifers or evergreen trees retain their foliage or needles year round. In spring the colorful new growth on evergreen trees and evergreen shrubs is a delight. In Summer and Fall the dark green conifers are a lush backdrop for bright colored annuals and perennials. Winter is magical with snow dusting shown on a rich green backdrop of evergreen shapes? Rhododendrons, some Azaleas and Euonymus are considered to be evergreen shrubs also because they retain their leaves during the winter.

Uses in the Landscape

- Frame or form a backdrop for homes and other buildings
- Screen an unsightly object or view all year long
- Create a wind break
- Offer privacy
- Plant on north and northwest of house to block winter winds
- Shelter for birds and wildlife
- Serve as a focal point
- Provide seasonal color in winter landscapes

Factors to Consider Color

Although we think of evergreens as green, they actually may be several other colors, including silver-blue, blue-green, and yellow-green. The foliage color compliments the buildings and other plantings in the area.



Colorado Spruces with contrasting Goldmound Spirea Arborvitae (Globe & Pyramidal) with Rose beds

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1. ***Texture/Effect-*** Spruces are dense and compact in form providing a bold background in a large landscape. Pines tend to have an open, airy texture. Hemlocks are medium-sized to large evergreen trees. Some evergreens have ornamental bark or branching habits that are attractive in all seasons. Keep in mind the effect you intend when making your plant selection.
2. **Ultimate size-** Always keep in mind the ultimate height and width of the plant you're selecting and how it affects the surrounding plantings, walks, driveways, patios and buildings. The four-foot tall pine may be a nice accent in front of your house today, but if it grows to 50 feet, it will require pruning that may damage the tree's form or habit.
3. **Tall and narrow evergreen trees-** Like Pyramidal Arborvitae, 'Wichita Blue', 'Blue Point' and Hetz Junipers add height and drama to the landscape. Use these next to a tall, two or more stories, building. In the yard and garden use them as a dramatic accent when you want a sweeping up toward the sky effect. They can also be effective in screening utility poles from view.
4. **Large evergreen trees-** Like Native Spruce, Hemlock, Pine and Fir are best kept at a slight distance from buildings. Pruning such evergreen trees while still young will cause them to thicken growing. Use them to block unsightly views, as windbreaks, large hedges and noise blockers. Large evergreen trees create an atmosphere of calm.
5. **Broad growing evergreen trees-** Such as Techny and Nigra Arborvitae, mid size Junipers, Mugo Pines and Capitata Yews are quite versatile. They can all be used as specimen plants alone or in groupings. They make fine hedge stock. All can be used as foundation plantings around fairly large

buildings. Any except the Mugo Pine would be a good choice to hide service meters or screen from view any number of distracting views.

- 6. Dwarf and Intermediate evergreen shrubs-** Dwarf Alberta Spruce, Globe Arborvitae, Boxwood, and Dense Yew can be used as tiny specimen and hedges in and around the perennial garden. One of the pleasant side effects of these evergreen hedges has been an increase in small song bird population in the garden. Hetz and Little Giant Cedar grow two and three feet tall and their natural round shape and size adds a touch of whimsy to flower and evergreen shrub gardens.

Here are just a few of my favorite evergreens for home-

- **Taxus Yews-** Have darker green foliage and stand up well to extreme weather conditions. Their new growth each year has a bright green appearance, giving them some nice variation. They can be trimmed tightly each year and really do not have any problems with insects or fungus.
- **Arborvitae-**The emerald green arborvitae is a little more versatile in the home landscape. With softer leaves and more available shapes and sizes, it makes a perfect foundation shrub, focal point or even grown in groups to make a screening hedge.
- **Boxwood-** If you want an evergreen with a more standard “leafy” appearance, then boxwood is for you. The boxwood is a formal appearing evergreen with small leaves. They are very versatile and can take a pretty heavy shearing during the year if you want to keep them small.
- **Holly Shrubs-** You can get varieties differing from light green to dark and larger leaves to smaller. In addition, as long as you plant both male and female plants near one another, they will develop bright red berries in the fall, giving a nice color variation during the winter.
- **Junipers-** Are popular evergreen shrubs in green, blue and golden shades. They are used either for creating privacy hedges or as borders for property. There are many varieties of junipers, their height ranging from one foot to 15 feet. If you feel sharp spines while touching the plant canopy, then the plant is probably a juniper.