

Evergreen Colors for Winter



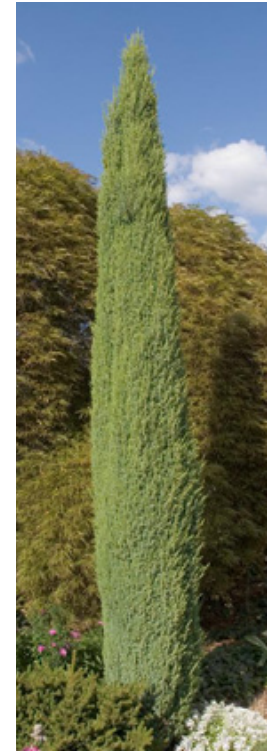
Dwarf Serbian spruce
Scientific name: *Picea omorika*
'nana'



Blue Rug Creeping Juniper
Scientific name: *Juniperus horizontalis*
'Wiltonii'



Dwarf Japanese Garden Juniper
Scientific name: *Juniperus procumbens*
'Nana'



Compressa Common Juniper
Scientific name: *Juniperus communis*
'Compressa'



Weeping White Spruce
Scientific name: *Picea glauca*
'Pendula'

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At this time of year, many of our landscapes lack interest, especially when it comes to color. Conifers fill a great void in this area because they aren't restricted to just green. Several varieties of spruce, juniper and arbovitae possess colored foliage. These conifers differ in their ability to tolerate extremes in growing conditions. Many are cold tolerant, but are unable to withstand extreme heat. Others are heat tolerant, but unable to take colder growing conditions. Make sure the conifer you select is appropriate for your site.

Most prefer well-drained soils with a neutral to slightly acid pH. While most conifers prefer full sun, many can tolerate partial shade. Exceptions to this are golden or light-colored conifers and blue-needled cultivars. Golden or light-colored conifers prefer a site with bright,

filtered light. Too much sun can severely burn and damage the needles ruining the plant. Blue-needled conifers grow best in full sun.

In most cases, nature doesn't create bad color combinations, however in some instances, we do. An effective way to use colored conifers is to select a monochromatic or single color scheme, such as using all blue-toned plant material. Monochromatic plantings create a restful atmosphere.

More striking effects can be created by selecting contrasting colors. Conifers with gold or yellow foliage planted with purple foliated or flowering plants is an attractive combination. Other attractive combinations include orange flowers with blue colored conifers, or red flowers with green foliage. Other color combinations are attractive as well. Instead of choosing bright green foliage for use with blue conifers, select green-gray foliage instead. This gives the blue area some life.

However, if only a few blue conifers are being used, the blue color jumps out when placed against a green background.

A green background for yellow plants has the same effect, creating very attractive plantings. Yellow conifers also look good when combined with gray-green or blue-green foliage varieties. An attractive natural color combination is possible when purple and green foliage is combined. To brighten up an area, use green with white or silver-leaved plants. Bi-colored conifers function best when used as accents, massed in large beds or even woven as a band of color through other perennials or shrubs.

The size and form of colored conifers varies with the genus, species and cultivar. They range from low ground covers to medium- or large-sized shrubs to trees. Several fall into the "dwarf" category, because their rate of growth is slow. The most common forms are rounded

or upright and broad.

Bi-color plants to consider for our area include *Juniperus communis* 'Compressa', *Juniperus communis* 'Pencil Point' or *Picea omorika* 'Nana'. Blue varieties include *Juniperus communis* 'Berkshire', *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Wiltonii', *Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana', *Picea glauca* 'Pendula' and *Pinus strobus* 'Macopin'. A good plum colored conifer is *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Glomerata'. A white selection is *Tsuga canadensis* 'Gentsch White'.

Colored conifers are assets to the landscape year-round. They are a permanent feature compared to flowers, so it is important to take the time necessary to select the proper variety for your location.

Fall Vegetable Garden Clean Up

Before putting all your gardening tools away for the year, take an afternoon this fall and clean up the vegetable garden. Removing garden debris, including dead plant material and rotted vegetables, will help to reduce disease and insect problems next year. The time spent now cleaning up the garden, will be well worth it next summer.

Before beginning your garden clean up, sit down and make notes of this year's garden layout and what did or didn't work. This will make planning a rotation schedule for next year's garden easier. Also note particular insect or disease problems encountered this year and which vegetable cultivars you tried.

Next, tomato cages, stakes, trellises and other support materials should be pulled out of the garden, cleaned and placed in storage for winter.

Remove from the garden any plants that have had insect or disease problems. Also collect any fall fruits or vegetables, including dried up "mummies." Many insects overwinter in the garden in last season's dead plant material. Similarly, diseased plant material remaining in the garden will serve as a source of fungal spores to

re-infect next year's vegetables. Don't add these to the compost pile. Compost piles usually will not reach a high enough temperature to kill all pathogens, like fungal spores or bacteria. Instead, discard or burn these plant residues.

Crop residues from healthy plants, such as roots, leaves and stems, are a valuable source of organic matter and will break down to improve the texture of garden soil. Plants that have not had pest problems can be cut up and put in the compost pile or turned into the soil for added organic matter. Organic mulches, such as straw or grass clippings, can be tilled into the soil.

The leaves from your trees are an excellent source of organic matter for the vegetable garden. After

raking the leaves, scatter them over the vegetable garden and till them in. You can use your mower to remove the leaves from your lawn and then add them to the vegetable garden. Since mowing chops the leaves into smaller pieces, they will break down faster once added to the soil of your vegetable garden.



Winter Burn and Winter Drying Common Injury to Trees

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Winter burn and winter drying are two common injuries to trees caused by weather.

Winter burn refers to the browning of the needles on coniferous trees during the winter months. It is caused by rapid temperature changes, particularly on the south sides of trees where there is more exposure to the sun. Rapid temperature changes, which occur most often during sunset and sunrise, damage or kill needle tissues. Injured trees will usually recover if damage is not too severe as new growth from healthy buds cover damaged areas.

Winter drying damages both evergreens and deciduous trees. The actual damage occurs in late winter or early spring, but the symptoms may not show up until growth begins in the spring. Winter drying is caused by the desiccation of foliage and twigs by warm, dry winds, when water conduction is restricted by freezing of plant tissues or by frozen soil. All trees transpire, or lose water, even during the winter months. Sometimes this loss is greater than the roots can replace and drying damage results. Minor damage results in reddening or browning of foliage, which may later recover. Symptoms of more severe injury includes browning and subsequent death of branch tips or entire branches. The side of the tree facing prevailing winds is most susceptible to winter drying.

Often, a combination of winter burn and winter drying will occur, occasionally complicated by drought. If damage is severe enough, affected branches may die.



Winter burn (freeze damage) on conifers.



Sometimes, the entire tree may be killed.

Little can be done to control weather, but a few precautions can be taken to reduce the possibility of damage:

- Chose species which are hardy and best adapted to the area.
- Plant in well-drained, deep soils.
- Plant where trees may be protected from winds and sun.
- Water trees thoroughly in the fall and during the winter when water can be taken from the soil.
- Mulch around trees to prevent deep freezing.
- Maintain a fertile, well-aerated soil to encourage deep root growth.