

Evergreen Shrubs

Fact Sheet No. 7.414

Gardening Series | Trees and Shrubs

by J.E. Klett and R.A. Cox*

Evergreens add year-round beauty and attractiveness to home landscapes. For practical purposes, evergreen shrubs are classified as broadleaved or narrowleaved. Narrowleaved evergreens such as pines and junipers have needlelike foliage. Evergreen plants that do not have needle-like foliage are known as broadleaved evergreens.

All evergreens lose some of their leaves each year. Most broadleaved evergreens lose some of the older leaves during the winter or when new growth resumes in the spring. Narrowleaved evergreens can maintain foliage for two years or more. Eventually the innermost, oldest foliage drops off. Evergreens that are sheared tend to be bare on the inside because the outer growth promoted by shearing excessively shades the foliage towards the inside, causing it to drop.

Selecting Evergreens

When selecting landscape evergreens, consider soil and site conditions before deciding what to plant. Many broadleaved evergreens fare poorly in Colorado if placed on a south or west exposure due to bright winter sun, cold and drying winds.

Broadleaved evergreens do best if located on protected east or north exposures. Consider mature size when planting evergreens. If evergreens are planted too close together or too close to a structure, the natural shape and beauty of the plants can be affected.

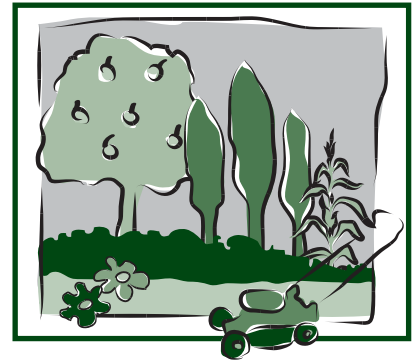
For evergreen shrubs adaptable to 6000 feet or less in Colorado, see Table 1 for narrowleaved evergreens, and Table 2 for broadleaved evergreens. As a general rule, broadleaved evergreens require consistent soil moisture. The general soil moisture conditions for good plant performance are shown in the tables.

Drainage and Soil Conditions

Good drainage and soil aeration are essential for optimum growth. Where planting soils are mostly clay, amend them with coarse organic material such as compost, sphagnum peat or aged barnyard manure. It takes about 3-5 cubic yards of organic material per 1,000 square feet to improve a clay soil. Thoroughly mix the organic material into clay soil, to a depth of 8 to 10 inches.

If planting soils are too sandy, improve water-holding capacity by similarly adding organic amendments. An organic mulch is recommended over the entire area after planting. See 7.214, *Mulches for Home Grounds* for more information. Refer to 7.403, *Evergreen Trees* for additional cultural information on evergreens.

Most evergreen shrubs growing in Colorado landscapes, whether recently transplanted or well-established, benefit from supplemental water during winter dry spells. To learn more, see fact sheet 7.211, *Fall and Winter Watering*.



Quick Facts

- All evergreens lose some of their leaves each year.
- Broadleaved evergreens grow best in areas protected from winter sun, cold and drying winds.
- When selecting evergreens, consider soil and site conditions.
- Consider mature size when planting evergreens as overcrowding evergreens will affect their natural shape and beauty.
- Broadleaved evergreens generally require more consistent soil moisture than most narrowleaved evergreens.
- Good soil drainage is essential for optimum growth.

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Table 1. Narrowleaved evergreen shrubs.

Plant Name	Size (H' x W')	Growth Rate	Soil Moisture	Exposure	Comments and Cultural Hints
Arborvitae					
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i> Eastern Arborvitae 'Hetz Midget' 'Holmstrup' 'Little Giant'	3 x 3 5 x 3 4 x 4	S S S	M M-H M	S to PS S to PS S to PS	Dense, globe-shaped. Compact pyramid; holds foliage color in winter. Globe-shaped.
<i>Thuja orientalis</i> Oriental Arborvitae 'Aurea Nana'	4 x 3	S	M	S to PS	Dense, oval-shaped; gold color is lost in excessive shade.
Juniper					
<i>Juniperus sabina</i> Savin Juniper 'Arcadia' 'Tamariscifolia'	2 x 6 4 x 8	M M	L L	S S	Spreading & mounded with lacy bright green foliage. Spreading and mounded with tiered branching – Also known as Tammy.
<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> Rocky Mountain Juniper 'Table Top Blue'	6 x 8	M	L	S	Silvery-blue foliage; broad, flat-topped habit.
<i>Juniperus squamata</i> Singleseed Juniper 'Blue Star'	3 x 4	S	L	S-PS	Silvery-blue needles arranged in a star-like pattern; compact mounded habit.
<i>Juniperus x media</i> Spreading Juniper 'Armstrong' 'Holbert' 'Old Gold' 'Pfitzeriana Compacta' 'Sea Green'	4 x 8 3 x 8 3 x 6 4 x 9 6 x 8	M M M M M	L L L L L	S S S S S	Gray-green lacy foliage on arched branches. Silver-blue foliage with wide spreading growth habit. Golden-yellow arching branch tips. Gray-green foliage; dense, spreading habit. Mint green foliage, vase-shaped habit, also known as Mint Julep™.
Pine					
<i>Pinus cembra</i> Swiss Stone Pine 'Nana'	8 x 5	S	L-M	S-PS	Compact, dense with blue-green needles.
<i>Pinus densiflora</i> Japanese Red Pine 'Umbraculifera' Tanyosho Pine	10 x 10	S	M	S	Umbrella form with orange bark and medium green needles.
<i>Pinus mugo</i> Mugo Pine 'Big Tuna' 'Mops' 'Slowmound' 'Pumilio' 'White Bud'	10 x 7 3 x 3 4 x 6 6 x 8 3 x 4	S S S S S	L L L L L	S S S S S	Dense, upright habit; dark green needles. Dense, compact globe; dark green needles. Dense, compact mushroom-shaped; dark green needles. Variable habit; multi-stemmed. White buds contrast with dark green needles.
<i>Pinus nigra</i> Austrian Pine 'Hornibrookiana'	3 x 6	S	L	S	Broad shrubby form with dark green needles.
<i>Pinus strobus</i> Eastern White Pine 'Blue Shag'	4 x 4	S-M	M	S-PS	Globe-shape form with blue-green foliage.
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> Scotch Pine 'Albyn Prostrata' 'Glauca Nana' 'Globosa Viridis' 'Hillside Creeper' 'Pumila'	3 x 8 8 x 6 8 x 4 3 x 8 10 x 6	S-M S S M S-M	L L-M L-M L-M L-M	S S-PS S-PS S-PS S-PS	Spreading form with shiny green needles. Dense, rounded habit; blue-green needles. Upright pyramid with clustered needles. Spreading form with medium green needles that become lighter in winter months. Broad, upright habit; bluish-green needles.

Table 1 (cont.). Narrowleaved evergreen shrubs.

Plant Name	Size (H' x W')	Growth Rate	Soil Moisture	Exposure	Comments and Cultural Hints
Spruce					
<i>Picea abies</i> Norway Spruce 'Elegans'	4 x 6	S	M	S-PS	Nest-shaped with short needles.
'Nidiformis'	3 x 5	S	M	S-PS	Nest-shaped with short green needles.
'Pendula'	6 x 8	S	M	S-PS	Weeping habit, short dark green needles.
'Pumila'	4 x 5	S	M	S-PS	Compact, nest-shaped mound with dark needles.
<i>Picea glauca</i> White Spruce 'Conica'	8 x 4	S	M	S-PS	Dense, conical shape with short green needles; best with winter protection.
Dwarf Alberta Spruce					
<i>Picea omorika</i> Serbian Spruce 'Nana'	4 x 5	S	M	S-PS	Broad, pyramidal form with silvery green needles.
<i>Picea pungens</i> Colorado Spruce 'Globe'	3 x 4	S	M	S-PS	Globe-shaped with green needles.
'Mesa Verde'	2 x 5	S	M	S-PS	Nest-shaped with green needles.
'St. Mary's Broom'	3 x 4	S	M	S-PS	Globe-shaped with blue-green needles.
Yew					
<i>Taxus cuspidata</i> Japanese Yew 'Monloo'	3 x 8	S	M	PS-Sh	Compact, spreading form, dark green needles and red fruit.
Emerald Spreader™					
<i>Taxus x media</i> Anglojap Yew 'Densiformis'	3 x 7	S	M	PS-Sh	Dense, rounded form with dark green needles and red fruit.
'Hicksii'	8 x 3	M	M	PS-Sh	Columnar form with dark green needles and red fruit.
<p>Key: Growth Rate: S=slow; M=moderate; F=fast Soil Moisture: H=high; M=medium; L=low Exposure: S=sun; PS=partial sun; Sh=Shade Plant Select® plants may be viewed online at www.plantselect.org</p>					

Table 2. Broadleaved evergreen shrubs.

Plant Name	Size (H' x W')	Growth Rate	Soil Moisture	Exposure	Comments and Cultural Hints
Barberry					
<i>Berberis x mentorensis</i> Mentor Barberry	5 x 5	M	L-M	S-PS	Upright to spreading, spiny twigs, leaves turn purplish in fall, semi-evergreen.
Boxwood					
<i>Buxus microphylla</i> Littleleaf Boxwood 'Wintergreen'	3 x 3	S-M	M	PS-Sh	Globe shaped, lustrous dark green leaves; needs protected spot.
<i>Buxus microphylla koreana</i> Korean Boxwood 'Julia Jane'	3 x 4 4 x 4	S-M S-M	M M	PS-Sh PS-Sh	Broad, round dark green leaves turn yellowish brown in winter. Upright rounded habit; new leaves lighter green, older leaves darker green.
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> Vardar Valley Boxwood 'Vardar Valley'	3 x 4	S-M	M	PS-S	Flat topped with dark blue-green leaves.
Broom					
<i>Cytisus purgans</i> Spanish Gold™ Broom	3 x 5	M	M-L	S-PS	Dense mounded habit; bright yellow flowers in spring; good hardiness; Plant Select® 2000.
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i> 'Moonlight' Moonlight Scotch Broom	5 x 5	M	L	S	Upright becoming open; light yellow flowers; narrow green leaves; stems and twigs remain green.

Table 2 (cont.). Broadleaved evergreen shrubs.

Plant Name	Size (H' x W')	Growth Rate	Soil Moisture	Exposure	Comments and Cultural Hints
<i>Cytisus</i> x 'Lena' Lena Broom	3 x 4	M	L	S	Upright becoming more open; yellow and red flowers; narrow green leaves; stems and twigs remain green.
Cotoneaster					
<i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i> 'Coral Beauty' Coral Beauty Cotoneaster	2 x 6	M	M	PS	Wide spreading; glossy green leaves; semi-evergreen; white flowers; red fruit; needs protected spot.
Euonymus					
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i> 'Emerald Gaiety'	3 x 4	M	M	PS-S	Mounded and spreading; green leaves with white margins and pink tinge in winter; can climb.
'Emerald 'n Gold'	2 x 4	S-M	M	PS-Sh	Mounded and spreading; green leaves with gold margins and pink tinge in winter; can climb.
'Green Lane'	3 x 6	S-M	M	PS-Sh	Mounded and spreading; glossy dark green leaves; pink fruit with orange seed in late summer; can climb.
'Moonshadow'	2 x 4	S-M	M	PS-Sh	Spreads, yellow leaves with green irregular margins; can climb.
'Sarcoxie'	6 x 6	M-F	M	PS-Sh	Upright spreading habit, glossy dark green leaves; creamy fruits with orange seeds; can climb.
<i>Euonymus kiautschovicus</i> 'Manhattan' Manhattan Euonymus	4 x 6	M-F	M	PS-Sh	Rounded, glossy dark green leaves; often winter burns in exposed sites but recovers with new growth.
Holly					
<i>Ilex x meserveae</i> 'Blue Boy'	5 x 5	S	M	PS-Sh	Spreading habit with glossy, dark green spiny leaves; male, does not set fruit; needs well amended soil in protected area.
'Blue Girl'	5 x 5	S	M	PS-Sh	Spreading habit with glossy, dark green spiny leaves; female, sets bright red fruit if planted near male plant such as 'Blue Boy'.
Berri Magic Kids™	5 x 5	S	M	PS-Sh	'Blue Boy' and 'Blue Girl' potted in the same container.
Manzanita					
<i>Arctostaphylos x coloradensis</i> Panchito™	1 x 3-5 1 x 2-3	S S	L-M L-M	S-PS S-PS	Spreading habit, white-pink flowers followed by red fruit; needs well drained soil; Plant Select® 2005. Mounded habit, white flowers followed by red fruit; needs well drained soil; Plant Select® 2006.
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> Kinnikinnick, Bearberry	.5 x 5	S	L-M	PS-Sh	Spreading habit; pink tinged red; flowers followed by red fruit; prefers neutral to acidic well drained soils.
'Massachusetts'	.5 x 5	S	L-M	PS-Sh	Spreading habit, pink-tinged flowers followed by red fruits; prefers neutral to acidic well drained soils.
Oregon Grapeholly					
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> Oregon Grapeholly	6 x 5	S-M	L-M	PS-Sh	Upright, spreading habit with blue-green, spiny, thick leaves that turn purplish in winter; yellow flowers followed by blue-black, grape-like fruit.
'Compactum' Compact Oregon Grapeholly	3 x 3	S	L-M	PS-Sh	Dense, mounded habit, glossy, thick, spiny leaves turn maroon in winter; flowers and fruit as above.
<i>Mahonia repens</i> Creeping Oregon Grapeholly	1 x 3	S	L-M	PS-Sh	Low, spreading ground cover; blue-green, spiny leaves turn purplish in winter; flowers and fruit as above.
Pyracantha					
<i>Pyracantha angustifolia</i> 'Gnozam'	5 x 5	M	L-M	S-PS	Globe-shaped, dense habit with thorny branches; dark green, narrow leaves; white flowers followed by orange persistent fruit.
Gnome® Pyracantha 'Monon'	6 x 5	M	L-M	S-PS	Upright, spreading habit with thorny branches; dark green, narrow leaves; white flowers, orange persistent fruit.
Yukon Belle® Pyracantha					
<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i> 'Lowboy'	3 x 6	M	L-M	S-PS	Lower, spreading habit; rich green foliage; white flowers followed by orange persistent fruit.
Lowboy Pyracantha 'Wyattii'	6 x 6	M	L-M	S-PS	Upright, spreading habit with thorny branches; oval dark green leaves; white flowers followed by orange-red fruit.
Wyatt Pyracantha					

Table 2 (cont). Broadleaved evergreen shrubs.

Plant Name	Size (H' x W')	Growth Rate	Soil Moisture	Exposure	Comments and Cultural Hints
Rhododendron					
<i>Rhododendron</i> spp.					
'Nova Zembla'	5 x 5	S	M-H	PS-Sh	Upright, rounded habit; dark green leathery leaves and red flowers; needs amended acidic soil and a protected site.
'P.J.M.'	4 x 4	S	M-H	PS-Sh	Rounded habit with smaller, leathery leaves that turn maroon in winter; lavender-pink flowers; needs amended acidic soil and a protected site.
'Ramapo'	3 x 3	S	M-H	PS-Sh	Compact mounded habit; dark green leaves turn purplish in winter; violet-purple flowers; needs amended acidic soil and a protected site.
'Roseum Elegans'	5 x 6	S	M-H	PS-Sh	Upright, spreading habit; larger oblong leaves turn reddish in winter; rose-pink flowers; needs amended acidic soil and a protected site.
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Trees and shrubs – the backbone of your landscape

Trees and shrubs add year-round structure, beauty and texture to Colorado landscapes. They can attract wildlife and protect your home and yard from wind and sun. To get the most from them, see our many fact sheets on:

- Selecting trees and shrubs.
- Planting and watering.
- Pruning.
- Coping with diseases and insects.

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