



Bookcliff Gardens

nursery & landscape

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Evergreen Trees And Shrubs

Location and selection

Not all evergreens are alike. There is a wide variety of different evergreen plants to choose from. They can range from 4" tall creeping groundcovers to 100' tall majestic giants. Consider the size of the area you want to put an evergreen into and choose accordingly. Although most evergreens grow more slowly than deciduous plants, they can quickly outgrow an area unless you choose carefully.

Also keep in mind that some evergreens thrive in full sun while others require shade. Our sun tends to be more intense than in other parts of the country, so what may grow in full sun elsewhere might need some shade here. Beware that sometimes even the tag on the plant can mislead you. Ask one of our Plant Professionals for guidance as to where to plant a certain evergreen.

Planting

Dig a hole twice as wide and only as deep as the rootball of the plant. Be sure to adjust the hole so that the top of the rootball is 1" to 2" above ground level. Next, remove the container. Plastic pots can be removed by turning the shrub upside down or laying it on its side and gently tapping at the pot until the plant slides out. Refill the hole with a blended mixture of 1/3 **Soil Pep** and 2/3 of your garden soil. Firm the backfill by tamping it gently. Build a watering basin around the shrub high enough to hold 3" to 4" of water. Make the basin at least as wide as the hole that was dug. Immediately water the plant deeply by filling the basin with water once, letting it soak in, and filling it up a second time. If your evergreen is in a lawn, remove the basin after this initial watering. The use of **Fertilome Root**

Stimulator at planting time will greatly reduce transplant shock and encourage your evergreens to resume their normal growing habits more quickly.

Pruning

Evergreen trees need little, if any pruning. If your pine, spruce, or fir is thinner than you want, cut or break back the candles (the expanding buds) in the spring as they grow to make the tree denser. Any other pruning would be to remove any unwanted branches entirely by cutting them off at the trunk or at an adjoining branch.

Evergreen shrubs such as juniper, arborvitae, or yew can be sheared if desired. Don't shear a plant in fall or winter when freezing temperatures occur. Don't cut evergreen shrubs back too far. Looking inside of an established plant, you'll see that there is no live, green foliage there. If you prune back hard enough to expose this bare interior portion of the plant, it will rarely resprout, leaving you with a brown, bare side of your evergreen shrub.

Pests

Most disease and insect problems should be dealt with as they appear. Because of the variety of possible problems, proper diagnosis is very important. Bring in an affected sample to Bookcliff Gardens where we can diagnose the problem and prescribe proper treatment.

Feeding

No additional fertilizer is usually needed the first year. Once the plant has established itself, it can be fertilized with **Bookcliff Gardens Choice Professional Turf Food**. Apply it in late April after irrigation water is available and again in mid June. Be sure to water it in well after applying. Iron supplements may be needed for certain plants. Use **Fertilome Liquid Iron** two to four times in the spring and early summer. The iron will do the most good if it's applied at the same time as the Professional Turf Food.

Watering

It is impossible to give a watering schedule that will be right for everyone all of the time. Factors such as the soil type, how big the plant is, how fast the plant is growing, air temperature, humidity, wind and light intensity all will affect how often a particular plant will need watering.

The basic rule of thumb is to water deeply, but infrequently. Get the water down a minimum of 18" at each watering. This encourages the plant to develop a deep, drought tolerant root system. Then give the soil a chance to dry slightly between waterings. It is common for people to kill or unnecessarily stress their plants by watering too frequently. The roots of a plant require oxygen in order to function. If the soil is constantly waterlogged, there is not enough oxygen available to the root system and the roots suffocate and begin to die.

Knowing this, our recommendation is to water deeply by building a basin around plants that are not watered by lawn sprinklers. It should be wide enough to accommodate the root system of the plant (generally out past the drip line of the plant) and high enough to hold three or four inches of water when full. Fill the basin full, let it soak in, and fill it a second time. Then don't water the plant again until the soil in the basin begins to dry. Don't just look at the soil surface; dig down 4" to 6" to see how dry the soil is. The soil should be showing some significant drying down at that depth. One little trick is to scoop up a handful of soil from that depth and squeeze it into a ball. If the ball holds its shape after you let go, the soil is still wet. If the ball falls apart, its time to water. Using this method several times, you will be able to determine your own watering schedule.

For plants that will be watered with lawn sprinklers, water as described above at planting time. Then remove the basin. Most of the plant's day to day water needs will be met by the lawn watering. However, a deep soaking every month or two is recommended in addition to the lawn watering. In addition, during the winter a monthly deep soaking of all newly planted evergreens (especially Spruce) is a good idea. This should be done for the first two winters after planting.