

Evergreen Options

Evergreen trees are the backbone of our field and home windbreaks in protecting us from northwest winter winds. They also are frequently used in home landscapes as screening plants between yards and for adding winter color as specimen plants.

We have long relied on pines, junipers, and arborvitae in windbreak plantings and also and spruce in landscapes. Our pines have been hit hard by the pine wilt nematode and are no longer dependable plants for field windbreak use. The hot summers of 2010 and 2011 have caused serious damage to spruce – a plant adapted to higher elevations and northern climates.

This publication is a discussion of plants that are reliable for field windbreak use and landscape specimen plant use in the Sedgwick County Kansas area.

Evergreens for Field Windbreaks – full sun areas, no irrigation after establishing

Eastern Redcedar – *Juniperus virginiana* - matures at 30-50' in height. Planted at 12-15' spacing. Plant in well-drained locations. Better used near crop fields, as it can spread by seed in pastures and conservation areas.

Oriental Arborvitae – *Platycladus orientalis* formerly known as *Thuja orientalis* – Dependable in heat and drought conditions. Many of these planted in conservation plantings and farmsteads of the 1930's remain today. Rounded form, soft texture. Grows to 30-50' tall. Plant at 10-15' spacing. Does not spread by seed in pastures.

Pines are no longer recommended for field windbreak planting by the Sedgwick County Office of K-State Research and Extension due to Pine Wilt potential.

Evergreens for Screening in Landscapes

Eastern Redcedar – *Juniperus virginiana* - may use the native type, but more suitable are the improved landscape cultivars:

'Canaert' Juniper – 20' tall in 15 years. Compact pyramidal growth, tufted growth habit.

'Taylor' Juniper – looks like Italian Cypress. Grows to 25' tall and 3' wide. May be used as a screen or accent.

Upright Chinese Juniper – *Juniperus chinensis* – Similar habit to redcedar except is not susceptible to cedar-apple rust, that is an occasional aesthetic nuisance on redcedar. Improved cultivars include these and more:

'Keteleeri' Juniper – Broadly pyramidal, 15-20' tall in 15 years. Medium green foliage, rust resistant.

'Robusta' Juniper – 15' tall, 10' wide; tufted green foliage; attractive irregular form.

'Wintergreen Juniper' – 15-20'tall by 5-6' wide; pyramidal, dense, rich green foliage

Oriental Arborvitae – *Platycladus orientalis* – Other species of arborvitae, including the popular 'Green Giant' were heavily damaged or killed by the heat at 108°F and above in 2010 and 2011. The oriental arborvitaes came through this heat in great shape. Many cultivars are available including:

'Blue Cone' Arborvitae – 15-20' tall and spread; upright egg-shaped; dark green foliage with bluish cast; great for screening

'Goldspire' Arborvitae – up to 20'tall; 10' spread; full sun, nice deep gold winter color; tolerant of drought and poor soils; great for screening

Incense Cedar – *Calocedrus decurrens* - 20-25'tall; medium growth rate; prefers moist, well-drained soil, drought tolerant with age.

Specimen Plants – may not be dependable enough for general screening, but do great in well sited locations

Foster's Holly – *Ilex x attenuate 'Fosteri'* – up to 25' tall; slender conical; red fruits, protect from winter sun so site next to house on east or north side.

Atlas Cedar – blue and green forms are available. Heat tolerant, need excellent soil drainage.

Deodar Cedar – *Cedrus deodora* – 'Kasmir' and 'Karl Fuchs' are some of the cold hardiest of this species. 30-40' tall; protect from winter wind. Nice specimen

Black Hills Spruce – the most heat tolerant of all spruce, but still received considerable heat damage in summer of 2011. Plant in well-drained locations.

Pines – avoid planting scotch, Austrian, mugo, Japanese black pine due to pine wilt problems.

Other evergreen trees are available for planting. Select ones that are winter hardy to zone 6b, tolerant of alkaline conditions; and read labels closely for siting tolerances of sun, wind and drainage issues.

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