

## EVERGREEN PLANTING & CARE GUIDE

### Planting Your Evergreens

1. Amend the soil.
2. Tilling existing soil will make it easier to dig your holes and allow for better aeration around the root system after your evergreen has been planted.
3. Mix in compost, enhanced topsoil, soil conditioner, or potting soil for extra nutrients.
4. Place evergreens (still in pots) in the bed or yard and arrange them how you would like them to be displayed after planting.
5. Remember to call Diggers Hotline before you dig holes in your yard.  
<https://www.diggershotline.com/> (800) 242-8511
6. Dig a hole about as deep as the pot, and triple the size of the pot's width.
7. Break up the root system with a shovel or pruners to encourage the roots to grow out and down- not in a circle.
8. It is important not to bury too deep or too tightly (do not cover branches or trunk); be gentle while packing the soil around the plant.
9. Make sure all roots are covered with soil.
10. Cover the base with a layer of mulch to encourage water retention.
11. Water in the shrub(s).
12. Save the tag from each plant and keep a notebook where you write down exactly where you planted it, the year, and any other information you want to remember. This makes a great plant record for your home.

### Watering

1. Only water the base of the evergreens; water as close to the soil/root system as possible
2. Water everyday (depending on plant variety and weather conditions)- give each plant an extra amount especially during the hottest days of the season
3. You can hand-water with a hose or watering can, however, with larger plants, it is more efficient to purchase a soaker hose and run it for 20-30 minutes a day (plant size, quantity, and weather depending); you can also purchase a tree watering donut to fill at the base of the evergreen

### Fertilizing

1. Depending on the fertilizer variety, it is good to fertilize plants once a month.
2. Never fertilize more than what is recommended on the fertilizer packaging.
3. If the plants are over-fertilized, it can cause them to die.

## Winter Preparation

1. It is best to plant evergreens before the end of November.
2. Spraying an anti-desiccant can help with preventing water loss from the evergreen's foliage.

## Pruning Advice from UW-Extension

Laura Jull, UW-Madison Horticulture, UW-Extension

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/pruning-evergreens/>

Revised: 8/13/2012 Item number: XHT1013

### Why prune?

Pruning is important for a variety of reasons. Pruning can help control the size of an evergreen, direct growth, or maintain plant health and appearance. Pruning can also increase the safety of an evergreen by removing broken, diseased, dead, or dying branches. In addition to pruning, selecting plants that are suited to your environment and location are very important. The ultimate height and spread, in addition to location of overhead powerlines, should be taken into account when selecting an evergreen for landscaping.

### How to prune specific evergreens:

Evergreen trees such as pine, spruce, fir, Douglas-fir, and hemlock require little pruning. These trees typically have a broad, pyramidal form with low branches, and should be left intact. DO NOT remove lower branches as this destroys the natural aesthetic form of the tree. NEVER remove the main, central stem. DO remove crossing, dead, diseased, or broken branches. Also remove individual branches to help maintain the tree's natural outline. When pruning large branches, use the 3-point method of pruning (refer to University of Wisconsin Garden Facts XHT1014).

**Pines:** New growth in pines occurs once a year from terminal buds. To maintain a more compact, densely branched habit, remove approximately 1/2 to 2/3 of the elongated terminal buds (candles) before the needles expand in spring. Candles can be pinched in half (see figure), or pruned with hand pruners. Do not cut branches back to older growth farther down the stem. Pines produce buds only at the tips of the current season's growth and will not produce new shoots farther back down the stem.

**Spruce, fir, and Douglas-fir:** New growth in these trees occurs once a year from terminal buds. To maintain the tree's natural shape and promote denser growth, cut the tip of the branch back to a lateral bud. Do not leave branch stubs. In early summer, you can also remove 2/3 of an unbranched tip to keep the tree fuller.

*Second Nature at Reads Creek, S7301 Hwy 14, Readstown, WI (608) 629-5975*

**Hemlocks, arborvitae, and yews:** These evergreen trees and shrubs have latent (dormant) buds farther back down the stem. Therefore, you can shear these evergreens in late spring or early summer after new growth has expanded. You can also prune them in spring before the new growth has expanded because any subsequent growth will hide the pruning cuts. You can also prune individual branches back to a bud or a branch to encourage more compact habit. If these evergreens are used in formal hedges, maintain the base of the hedge wider than the top to insure adequate light penetration to the bottom of the hedge.

**Junipers and false cypress:** These shrubs require little pruning. They have scale and awl-like foliage that can be tip pruned in summer. Selectively prune branches of these plants back to a side branch, so that pruning cuts are hidden under foliage. These plants should NOT be sheared or cut back to older, non-leafy areas because this type of pruning would take years for new growth to conceal. Do not prune these plants after August, as the new growth will not harden off sufficiently before winter.