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## Evergreen shrubs for home grounds (below 6,000 feet elevation)

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### Quick Facts

- All evergreens eventually lose their leaves.
- Most broadleaved evergreens grow best in north or east exposures to protect them from winter sun and cold, drying winds.
- When selecting evergreens, emphasize soil and site conditions as well as available space.
- Overcrowding evergreens will destroy their natural shape and beauty.
- Broadleaved evergreens require more constant soil moisture than most narrowleaved evergreens.
- Good soil drainage and aeration are essential for optimum growth of evergreens.

spring. Narrowleaved evergreens can maintain foliage for two years or more but eventually the oldest foliage drops off. Evergreens that are shorn tend to be bare on the inside because the outer growth shades out the foliage on the inside.

### Selecting Evergreens

Table 1 lists narrow-leaved evergreens, and Table 2 broadleaved evergreens, suitable to Colorado.

When selecting evergreens for a landscape, consider soil and site conditions before deciding what to plant. Nearly all broadleaved evergreens do poorly in Colorado if placed on a south or west exposure. Poor performance is due to bright winter sun and cold, drying winds.

Evergreens add to the beauty and attractiveness of the home landscape. For practical purposes, evergreens are classified as broadleaved and narrowleaved. Narrowleaved evergreens, such as pines and junipers (red-cedar), have needlelike foliage. Plants that are evergreen and have wide leaves are known as broadleaved types.

All evergreens eventually lose their leaves. Most broadleaved evergreens retain their foliage only one year, losing the older growth when new growth resumes in the

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1. Colorado State University Cooperative Extension landscape plants specialist and professor, horticulture, 9:92. ©Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, 1994. For more information, contact your county Cooperative Extension office.

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Broadleaved evergreens do best if located on an east or north exposure.

As a general rule, broadleaved evergreens require constant soil moisture. The general soil moisture conditions for good plant performance are shown in Table 1.

Consider mature growth and proper spacing before planting. If evergreens are planted too close together or too close to a structure, the natural shape and beauty of the plants can be ruined. To determine spacing between plants or distance from structures, divide by one-half the height given in Tables 1 and 2.

### Drainage and Soil Conditions

In all cases, good drainage and soil aeration are essential for optimum growth. Where soils tend to be heavy clay, amend them with a coarse organic material, such as compost, peat or aged barnyard manure to a minimum depth of 9 inches. It takes about 3 cubic yards of organic material for 1,000 square feet to improve a heavy soil. Thoroughly mix the organic material and soil to avoid layering.

If soil tends to be too sandy, improve its water-holding capacity by adding the amounts of an organic amendment mentioned above.

**Table 1: Narrow-leaved evergreens for home grounds.**

Plant name	Height*	Soil moisture	Exposure	Remarks
Arbor-vitae, Globe <i>Thuja occidentalis globosa</i>	3 to 4	M	E	Protect from winter sun and wind.
Juniper, Armstrong Globe <i>Juniperus chinensis</i> 'Armstrong'	4	D	S	Popular globe form for formal effect.
Juniper, Pfitzer <i>J. chinensis pfitzeriana</i>	8 to 10	DT, D	S	Available in blue and gold-tipped foliage varieties.
Juniper, Sabin <i>Juniperus sabina</i>	12 to 15	D		Upright, vase-shape. Green foliage.
Varieties:			S	"Feathery," green foliage. Foliage bluish-green.
Broadmoor	2			
Buffalo	1-1/2	M		
Tamarix	3-1/2			
Pine, Mugo <i>Pinus mugo</i>	3 to 8	D	S	Quite variable in size. Dwarf forms available.
Spruce, Maxwell <i>Picea abies</i> 'Maxwell'	2 to 3	M	E	Slow-growing. Forms mound twice as broad as high.
Yew, Hick <i>Taxus media</i> 'Hicks'	8 to 10	M		Soil must be well-drained.
Yew, Japanese Spreading <i>Taxus cuspidata densiformis</i>	4 to 5	M	S	Protect from winter sun and wind. Other varieties may be available.

Key: S = full sun (open, south or west exposure); DT = exceptionally drought-enduring once established (no more than natural rainfall);  
 Sh = shade (north exposure); D = Dry, well-drained soils (2 or 3 waterings per year)  
 E = east exposure. M = Moist, well-drained soils (4 to 6 waterings per year)

\* To convert to metrics, use the following conversion. 1 foot = 30 centimeters or .3 meters.

