



Juniperus spp. / Junipers

Think you know Junipers? Think again! With color variations from shades of yellow, dark to light green, and blue to silver, attractive berry-like cones, and a plethora of silhouettes from columnar and conical to bushy, cascading or creeping, Junipers may need a fresh look. These are not your father's Pfizers!

juniper's star qualities

- Junipers work well in containers, rock gardens, or raised beds, in groups or as accent plants. They make an attractive screen, windbreak, or shaped hedge as well as the classic base for a foundation planting. In the case of foundation plantings, their ease of culture may have led to over use in the past, but this is no reason to dismiss them. As long as attention is paid to mature size and scale, junipers can partner with many other landscape shrubs for original and arresting design choices.
- Well-drained soil and full sun is the key to happy junipers. When planted in shady conditions they can become ratty and open – and this may have unfairly led to their poor reputation.
- This is a genus that is adaptable to a wide range of soil fertility, pH levels, and textures from rocky or sandy to clay. Once established, they are tolerant of drought as well as severe winters.
- Unlike many conifers, junipers are not susceptible to wind damage and so make good windbreaks for more delicate plants in your garden groupings. They can withstand heavy pruning and for this reason may be used for a more formal hedge.
- Remember that newly planted trees need approximately 1" of water a week and take into account that your juniper may need supplemental watering for the first few years or until its root system is well established.
- Feed with a general purpose fertilizer before new growth begins in spring. Pruning should be done in the summer.

design tips

Remember, as with all evergreens, junipers are a year-round addition to your garden, giving shape and life to the winter landscape when deciduous shrubs and trees are bare and perennials have all but disappeared. In the summer their shape, texture and color can act as a foil or backdrop for your other favorite plants.

- Tall, shapely juniper cultivars are a good choice for adding an upper dimension to the garden when combined with other shrubs and perennials.
- Prostrate cultivars can blur and blend the edges of beds as they meet the lawn.
- Grouping several junipers with differing mature heights can form an arresting focal point especially when given a vista or forced perspective.
- Specially shaped junipers – spirals, espaliers, balls – add an elegant, formal design element complementing fountains and sculptures as well as other plants.
- Dwarf junipers are adaptable for bonsai or trough and container gardens as well as mixed in with perennials, grasses and shrubs with contrasting texture.
- Thoughtfully combining junipers with your hardscape elements – especially boulders and large stones – can add to your year-round design plan.

Architecture in the Garden: Selecting Junipers by Size, Color, and Shape

When designing your garden space, keep in mind the ultimate size of the juniper cultivar(s) you are selecting. Consider both color and shape when you are thinking of complementing or contrasting design ideas.

Upright Junipers: Columnar, Conical, and Pyramidal

<i>J. chinensis</i> 'Perfecta'	Olive green w/ tiny brown cones; narrow pyramidal shape; 15-18' x 6-8'
<i>J. communis</i> 'Gold Cone'	Bright, yellow-gold in spring; narrow pyramid form; 8' x 2'
<i>J. virginiana</i> 'Blue Arrow'	Gorgeous deep blue with contrasting tan to pink branches; finely shaped needles; tight, narrow upright form; 12-15' x 2'
<i>J. virginiana</i> 'Prairie Pillar'	Silver-blue year-round color; dense columnar form without pruning; compact, strong branches; 15-20' x 2-3'

Groundcover Junipers: Semi-Prostrate and Prostrate

<i>J. chinensis</i> 'Gold Star'	Yellow-gold branches accent light blue-green foliage; a winter garden standout; flat, spreading shape; 4' x 6'
<i>J. horizontalis</i> 'Lime Glow'	Chartreuse - yellow; reddish purple tinge in winter; wide-spreading, dense, compact form; 2' x 10'
<i>J. horizontalis</i> 'Icee Blue'	Silver-blue; tightly compressed foliage; very flat-growing form with trailing branches; makes a solid cover in short time; 4" x 8'
<i>J. horizontalis</i> 'Star Burst'	Medium green; prostrate; feathery foliage radiating from center; 2' x 5-6'

Espaliered and Shaped Junipers Prune in summer to maintain shape

<i>J. chinensis</i> 'Mint Julep'	Sea-green; finely tipped needles; densely shaped, medium-height, spreading groundcover, 4-6' x 6' when not grafted to a standard
<i>J. chinensis</i> 'San Jose'	Tan-tipped sage-green; very compact, stiff branches; low groundcover, 2' x 6-8' when not grafted to a standard
<i>J. squamata</i> 'Blue Carpet'	Very striking, rich, blue-grey; creeping form, 8-12" x 4-5' when not grafted to a standard
<i>J. virginiana</i> 'Canaertii'	Dark forest green; finely tufted needles; blue, berry-like cones; 20' in natural state
<i>J. virginiana</i> 'Glauca'	Year-round silvery blue-green; lovely distinctive berries; narrow, columnar form 15-20' x 2-3' in natural state

Miniature and Dwarf Junipers: Containers, Troughs, and Bonsai

<i>J. chinensis</i> 'Shimpaku'	Dwarf: gray-green; spiky, vase-shaped form; 3' x 4'
<i>J. chinensis</i> 'Shimpaku Fudu'	Dwarf: gray-green; spiky, vase-shaped form; 3' x 6'
<i>J. chin. X media</i> 'Lemon Hill'	Dwarf: Dusky blue-green; feathery branches; flat-planar, spreading shape; recommended for bonsai; 4" x 16"
<i>J. squamata</i> 'Loderi'	Miniature: Rich blue-green; dense branches; broad, upright form; 4' x 2'

Junipers are a symbol of longevity, strength, athleticism and fertility

For more information see: *Gardening with Conifers* by Adrian Bloom, Firefly Books, 2002