



## Junipers – *Juniperus* spp.

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 Pfitzers!

### 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 may be used for a more formal hedge.
- Remember that newly planted trees need approximately 1" of water a week and consider 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 combined with shrubs and perennials.
- Prostrate cultivars will blur and blend the edges of beds as they meet the lawn.
- Grouping several junipers with differing mature heights will form an arresting focal point, especially when given a vista or forced perspective.
- Shaped junipers – spirals, espaliers, balls – add an elegant design element complementing fountains and sculptures.
- Mini and dwarf junipers are traditional choices for bonsai. Their adaptability also makes them suitable for trough and container gardens. See our tip sheet *Miniature and Dwarf Conifers* for information on winterizing conifer containers.
- Thoughtfully combining junipers with your hardscape elements – paths, stairways, walls or large boulders – will add to a garden designed for beauty through all the seasons.

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

## Groundcover Junipers: Semi-Prostrate and Prostrate

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

## Espaliered and Shaped Junipers: Prune in summer to maintain shape

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

## Miniature and Dwarf Junipers: Containers, Troughs, and Bonsai

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

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

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