

Conifers

by Pat Stachon

Welcome to my new monthly article for the Russell and District Horticultural Society. I hope that you will find these gardening tips interesting and useful and that you will keep coming back each month to read more.

The almost record amounts of snow this year have created a gorgeous setting for the various coniferous trees. These are my favourite trees!

Once you have chosen the spot you want to plant a coniferous tree, research your choices by considering the following:

- check the height and width at maturity;
- decide on the shape - globe, pyramidal, columnar or vase-shaped;
- size – they can range from ankle-height to several stories high;
- colours - yes there are shades of green, blue, gold, yellow and tinges of red.

Most evergreens like sun but there are some that will tolerate partial shade such as yews and hemlocks. During the winter months strong sun and drying winds can cause browning of the needles. For new plantations watering prior freeze-up is very, very important. Here's a little more about two varieties:

The Juniper (*juniperus*) does well in dry hot sunny locations and is drought tolerant. The foliage consists of overlapping scales in bright blue-green, sometimes bluish tinges or gold highlights. The blue berry-like seed provides forage for the birds. There are junipers that are vase-shaped, pyramidal and tall, 3m and 1.5m wide.

The Cedar (*thuja occidentalis*) has a denser, flatter spray like foliage and soft to touch. Cedars love moist, sunny sites. The tall narrow varieties do well as specimens or hedging. There are several rounded varieties. "Golden Glove" and "Little Giant". I have both in my garden, and I love them!

These are only two of a vast choice of evergreens for your garden, large or small. I hope that you will plan to add these wonderful trees to your garden.

