

These plants are great they come in all shapes and sizes and provide all year colour to the Garden. A conifer is very likely to succeed no matter where you live. For most conifers like, slightly acid soil that is loamy and well-drained. Conifers tend to grow best in full sun, but a bit of afternoon shade is best for the dwarf conifers.

Use conifers to:

- Act as a backdrop to perennials, bulbs and annuals.
- Form a stand-alone feature in the garden.
- Give height to borders.
- Form wonderful frost or snow covered shapes in the winter garden.
- Selecting the right conifer Once you know where you want to add your conifer in the garden, you need to choose the right type, whether it be for structure, style or as a focal point. Look at the headings below and get some useful information to get you started.
- Columnar - tall and narrow, cylindrical
- These are great used in a shrub border to give extra height, at the end of a vista or as a feature set in the lawn. Examples include: *Juniperus scopulorum* 'Skyrocket' and *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata Aureomarginata.'
- Pyramidal - narrow at the top, wide at the bottom, These can make a stunning feature in the middle of a large lawn, or they can be used to hide unsightly features. Examples include: *Picea albertiana* 'Conica,' *Thuja occidentalis* 'Yellow Ribbon' and *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Yvonne.'
- Globose - spherical, bun shaped these conifers look amazing as punctuation points at the apex of a border, on either side of entrances, or giving strong shape in a border of daintier perennials. Examples include: *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Minima Glauca,' *Thuja occidentalis* 'Danica,' and *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Sungold.'
- Dwarfs - tiny conifers which reach a height of three feet, These are brilliant in containers and rockeries and provide year-round interest. Examples include: *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Minima Aurea,' *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Gnome,' *Juniperus communis* 'Compressa' and *Picea abies* 'Little Gem.'
- Right conifer, right place Conifers come in all shapes and sizes from dwarf conifers for containers and pots to conifers that can be used for screening and structure as a well established hedge.
- Container growing they may not seem the obvious choice but dwarf conifers live happily alongside other plants in containers, or by themselves as specimens. They are a particularly good idea for year round colour on patios and useful with winter and early spring flowerers, which can then be swapped for summer annuals.
- Rockery and water features, conifers are excellent planted by water features as the strong shapes of their foliage make wonderful reflections in the water and they don't lose their leaves into it! Use prostrate varieties to cover up the edges of your pond liner. In the rockery dwarf and prostrate conifers both have a place, particularly as they provide good weed cover and have so many varieties of shape and colour.

Depending on your soil type, available sunlight, and climate, you can choose a conifer that is very likely to succeed no matter where you live. For most conifers, slightly acid soil that is loamy and well-drained is ideal. It's best to plant in early autumn, since good drainage through the soil and ample pore spaces for air are key to the survival of conifer roots, be careful not to plant them too deeply, especially if your soil is heavy or has a lot of clay in it. If you plant a conifer that was grown in a container, prune off any roots that encircle the outside of the root ball. Make sure once you have planted your tree that you heel the root in to secure it, then make sure apply a good layer of mulch this will help keep the moisture in. Once you have planted your tree water deeply and infrequently so the soil stays evenly moist at its depths but dries out partially at the surface between watering. After the tree has established itself and begun to grow, remove any stakes and wires that were used to support it.

Conifers, unlike many deciduous & broad-leaved trees and shrubs, should never be pruned too drastically since most of them cannot sprout new growth from old wood. Yew and baldcypress are exceptions to this general rule and can sprout new growth even if cut back severely.

Never remove more than one third of the total growth at one time, and be sure to leave some green tissue that has potential to produce new growth. Never remove all of the green portion of conifers like juniper and arborvitae by shearing them. Removal of much of the green growth can result in a permanently misshapen plant or death of the plant. Control the size of sprawling conifers by pruning the longest branches back to where they meet with a shorter branch.

Pines can be shaped and forced to produce denser growth by a pruning technique known as candling. Candles are the elongated shoots produced at the beginning of each flush of growth. After the candles are fully grown, needles grow out of the candles. The candles can branch while they are growing if they are pruned before the needles begin to emerge. Break off about two-thirds of the candle with your fingers. Don't use pruners since you are likely to damage remaining needles, causing them to look unsightly

Conifers come in a vast range of colours and many change shade during the year. Careful choice can give you a great splash of colour in autumn and winter when most other plants are dormant. Because they are evergreen (i.e. do not lose their leaves) often with strong shapes, conifers are perfect for bringing shape, height and form to your garden.

Dwarf conifers are dwarf because of their genetics. A single bud in a normal tree may change its genetics and produce a clump of densely branched, dwarf growth. These growths are called witches brooms. Other dwarf conifers originated as slow growing individuals in a population propagated from seed. Dwarf conifers are often propagated by grafting since they are usually difficult to root and will not come true from seed.