

# Know your plant before you place it



**Carla Keast**

## AROUND THE YARD

Before you start digging the hole for that oh-so-cute little mugo pine that you've got stashed snugly under your arm, check the tag.

Aside from confirming its required light and moisture requirements, it will also let you know how big is it going to get. Yes, that little mugo pine is going to become four metres high and three metres wide. Step away from the window.

Evergreens are probably the best loved and worst placed plants. There are far too many cedars trying to grow through eaves. And before you dig that soft little wisp of a spruce tree into the ground, consider that you are putting up the equivalent of a wall. Not the ideal plant for placing anywhere near the front window.

All plants reach a specific known size. Before you purchase any plant, check the tag so you'll know how big it will be when

it's mature, and how much space it is going to need. If one variety is too big, put it back and find one that's smaller.

Colorado blue spruce are lovely, dramatic, and big. At a mature size of 20 metres high and eight metres wide, they can inadvertently take over the whole front or back yard. Fat Albert and Hoopsii are much smaller, just as nice — and just as dense. So keep the thought of a wall in mind as you place it.

Pyramidal cedars are a lovely narrow accent in the foundation planting. The Brandon and Skybound are readily available, and at a height of five-and-a-half metres, can dwarf a bungalow. Technito and Holmstrup are the same shape, but their size is much more in scale with the front door.

Globe cedars make for a nice end to the foundation planting or a great backdrop for flowers — unless they happen to be the five metre by two-and-a-half metre Techny. Both Woodwardi and Little Giant are smaller globe shaped alternatives.

The mugo pine? There's a dwarf available. But it can reach a height of a metre-



*Submitted photo*

**Some plants, including cedars like this one, can end up being more robust than originally expected.**

and-a-half. I'd still step away from the window.

When plants disappoint, it's not because they haven't grown to their full potential; it's usually because their full potential isn't what was expected.

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