

Evergreens ready to take spotlight



Carla
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AROUND THE YARD

As the last leaves of this exceptional autumn slowly come down, evergreens move to centre stage. They are the only green left standing.

For most of the year, evergreens are background plants. And that's not a bad thing. Ideally, about 50% of the plants in a yard serve as background sources of green. They are an anchor for the yard, a backdrop for flamboyant flowers, a counterbalance to flashy coloured leaves on other shrubs and trees.

While we don't usually plan our yard with the transitional seasons in mind, a little thought should be given to these moments. With leaves all gone, the evergreens are often left standing isolated, just adding to the look of leftovers from summer's party.

The key is to arrange the evergreens closely enough for them to appear as a single planting or two. A general guide is to use three or more of the same plant together. Junipers, the smaller globe cedars, and the dwarf spruce are good choices. A columnar cedar or upright juniper commands attention with two or three spreading junipers or dwarf spruce extending out from its base. If you must have a spruce or pine tree, one is usually enough. The larger spreading junipers are nice companions for these trees.

Our easy to grow conifers are going to be the primary plants of a late fall bed, but there are a couple of other evergreens that make admirable contributions.

Turkestan burning bush (*Euonymus nan* 'Turkestanica') is a fine textured upright shrub that prefers partial to full



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Turkestan burning bush can act as a nice compliment to a dwarf spruce.

shade, and moist soil. It matures into a meter by a meter hippy-like mass and looks great paired up with the small globe cedars or low spreading junipers.

Bergenia prefers partial to full shade, and any kind of soil moisture. It's a little workhorse of a plant in my mind. At a height of about 30 centimetres, it's plenty tall enough to add both colour and texture. It also turns red in the fall, and happily connects junipers and cedars together.

Dianthus is a delicate looking plant that prefers full sun and moist, well-drained soil. Don't be fooled by its

common name, Pinks, or the profusion of long lasting flowers it produces. This is no delicate fading violet. Its foliage adds a lovely green carpet to the fall yard.

An evergreen composition that emerges from summer's flowers and leaves makes for a simple, monochromatic green fall yard.

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