



GREEN SPRING GARDENS

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RECOMMENDED SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED EVERGREEN SHRUBS FOR THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Evergreen shrubs are valued for their relatively constant foliage year-round. Many evergreen shrubs have other attractive features, such as beautiful flowers and fruit. To maximize landscape interest, combine evergreen shrubs with deciduous shrubs and other plants in your landscape.

The following are useful definitions:

- Border - a bed that is generally longer than wide and planted with trees, shrubs, flowers, and/or other types of plants. May be backed by walls, fences, or hedges and is chiefly viewed from one side. Free-standing island beds are a variation on the border.
- Cultivar (cv.) - a cultivated variety designated by single quotes, such as 'Duke Gardens'. A **variety (var.)** or **subspecies (subsp.)**, in contrast, is found in nature and is a subdivision of a species.
- Full Shade - the amount of light under a dense deciduous tree canopy or beneath evergreens.
- Full sun – 6 hours or more of sun daily.
- Naturalistic Use - native plants that, when properly sited, perform well with minimal care; best used in an informal design that suggests a natural landscape.
- Part Shade - the amount of light in an area shaded part of the day, among deciduous trees with high branches, among deciduous trees with foliage that is not heavy, or among thinned deciduous woods.
- Semi-evergreen- a plant whose foliage is green for only part of the winter or only part of the foliage is fully evergreen.

The following is a list of small and medium-sized evergreen and semi-evergreen shrubs that perform well in the Washington, D.C. area. Most of these shrubs prefer a moist, well-drained site. Light requirements and special cultural requirements or tolerances are noted in the comments column. Recommended cultivars are noted in parentheses. **Species that are native to Virginia are marked with an asterisk (*) and highlighted in red.**

[Gold Medal Plant Awards are given annually by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to underused woody plants that perform especially well in gardens from New York City to Washington, D.C.]

MEDIUM-SIZED EVERGREEN SHRUBS (5-12 FEET TALL)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<p><i>Aucuba japonica</i> (‘Rozannie’, ‘Variegata’)</p>	<p>Japanese Aucuba</p>	<p>Border or groups; light shade to full shade; tolerates dry sites but not extreme drought</p>
<p><i>Camellia</i> cultivars that are winter hardy: Bloom from fall into early winter: ‘Ashton’s Pride’, ‘Winter’s Beauty’, ‘Winter’s Charm’, & ‘Winter’s Star’ are some of the cultivars with <i>C. oleifera</i> parentage (very hardy, large shrub on evergreen trees information sheet). Spring bloom: some of the hardiest <i>C. japonica</i> cultivars have performed well at Green Spring – ‘Bernice Boddy’ (‘Berenice Boddy’), ‘Jerry Hill’, & ‘Pink Perfection’. [<i>C. japonica</i> ‘Korean Fire’ – a very hardy red-flowered form that won a Gold Medal Award]</p>	<p>Winter Hardy Camellias</p>	<p>Border or groups; light shade to part shade; tolerate dry sites; best to plant in the spring so well established before winter (even hardy camellias can be killed to the ground in very cold winters, although they usually resprout) <i>C. japonica</i> cultivars tend to have a more formal growth habit than <i>C. oleifera</i> hybrids, & their flowers are more susceptible to cold damage since they bloom in the spring.</p>
<p><i>Chamaecyparis obtusa</i> dwarf & slow-growing cultivars including ‘Elmwood Gold’, ‘Filicoides’, ‘Kosteri’, ‘Nana’, ‘Nana Gracilis’, & ‘Nana Lutea’ <i>C. pisifera</i> ‘Golden Mop’ (golden threadleaf foliage) & ‘Snow’ (green & white foliage) (larger forms on evergreen tree information sheet)</p>	<p>Dwarf Hinoki Falsecypress Dwarf Sawara Falsecypress</p>	<p>Border; full sun to light shade; moist sites preferred, especially when young Groups or border; full sun to light shade</p>

<p><i>Ilex</i> China Boy ('Mesdob') & China Girl ('Mesog')</p> <p><i>I. cornuta</i> 'Dwarf Burford' ('Burfordii' is similar but a large shrub; 'Carissa' is an attractive small shrub but it is hard to purchase commercially)</p> <p><i>I. crenata</i> 'Sky Pencil' (columnar form)</p> <p><i>I. x meserveae</i>: Females - Blue Princess & Blue Maid ('Mesid') [Gold Medal Award] Males - Blue Prince & Blue Stallion ('Mesan')</p>	<p>China Boy & China Girl Holly</p> <p>Dwarf Burford Holly</p> <p>Skypencil Holly</p> <p>Blue Holly Cultivars</p>	<p>Groups, border, or hedge; full sun to part shade; need male & female plants for fruit set; tolerate dry sites in shady areas</p> <p>Border, groups, hedge, or screen; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites; 'Dwarf Burford' has some fruit set without a male <i>I. cornuta</i> for pollination</p> <p>Border; full sun best</p> <p>Border or groups; perform well in our area if sited properly: prefer light to part shade in well-drained soil; need a male pollinator for good fruit set</p>
<p><i>Illicium floridanum</i> (native to FL, GA, & other southeastern states) ('Halley's Comet')</p>	<p>Florida Anise-tree</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun (consistently moist sites) to part shade</p>
<p><i>Juniperus (virginiana*)</i> 'Grey Owl'</p>	<p>Grey Owl Juniper</p>	<p>Border, screen, or groups; full sun; tolerates dry sites; at least some <i>J. virginiana*</i> parentage; a rounded female form that has lots of blue cones</p>
<p><i>Kalmia latifolia*</i> (many cultivars are available - 'Olympic Fire' has been one of the best performers at Green Spring)</p>	<p>Mountain Laurel</p>	<p>Naturalistic use & borders; light shade to part shade; best in naturally moist sites with good drainage – doesn't like a lot of overhead irrigation (disease problems)</p>
<p><i>Osmanthus heterophyllus</i> ['Goshiki' is variegated – Gold Medal Award]</p>	<p>Holly Osmanthus</p>	<p>Hedge, screen, or groups; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites; this species has reseeded a lot at Green Spring in some areas during the last few years – keep an eye on potential for invasiveness</p>
<p><i>Picea pungens</i> 'Glauca Globosa' (low growing, rounded form with blue foliage) & 'Iseli Fastigate' (columnar blue form)</p> <p><i>P. abies</i> 'Nidiformis' (broad form with dark green needles)</p>	<p>Dwarf Colorado Blue Spruce</p> <p>Bird's Nest Spruce</p>	<p>Border; full sun in moist, well-drained sites – dwarf Colorado blue spruce especially needs to be sited carefully because can be short-lived if planted in wrong location</p>
<p><i>Pyracantha</i> cultivars that are disease resistant - 'Apache', 'Fiery Cascade', 'Mohave', 'Rutgers', & 'Teton'</p>	<p>Disease-resistant Firethorn</p>	<p>Border, hedge, screen, barrier, espalier, or groups (not a formal look); full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites; 'Rutgers' - small shrub</p>

<p><i>Rhododendron maximum*</i></p> <p>Hybrid cultivars that are adapted to our area such as 'Roseum Elegans'</p>	<p>Rosebay Rhododendron</p> <p>Heat Tolerant Rhododendron Cultivars</p>	<p>Border or groups; naturalistic use as well for <i>R. maximum</i>; light shade to part shade in moist sites with good drainage; contact the local American Rhododendron Society for other good cultivars (harder to grow than azaleas in our area)</p>
<p><i>Thuja occidentalis*</i> - dwarf & slow-growing gold cultivars with an upright habit: 'Sunkist' & 'Sudwelli'</p> <p>('Hetz Midget' is a small green shrub with a formal rounded habit)</p> <p>(larger forms on evergreen tree information sheet)</p>	<p>Dwarf Eastern Arborvitae Cultivars</p>	<p>Border; full sun to light shade; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><i>Viburnum x burkwoodii</i> (the species type tends to be semi-evergreen) ['Conoy' - Gold Medal Award & evergreen - flowers are not fragrant] ['Mohawk' - Gold Medal Award; deciduous with fragrant flowers]</p> <p>V. 'Chesapeake'</p> <p>V. x <i>pragense</i> – largest plant in this group</p>	<p>Burkwood Viburnum</p> <p>Chesapeake Viburnum</p> <p>Prague Viburnum</p>	<p>Border, screen, groups, or hedge; full sun to part shade; tolerate dry sites; selecting burkwood viburnum - I personally prefer the species type & 'Mohawk' due to their fragrant flowers</p>

SMALL EVERGREEN SHRUBS (2-5 FEET TALL)

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<p><i>Abelia x grandiflora</i> (‘Prostrata’ has green foliage; ‘Sunrise’ has yellow variegation)</p>	<p>Glossy Abelia</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun to light shade; semi-evergreen to evergreen; tolerates dry sites</p>

<p><i>Buxus cephalantha</i> (<i>B. harlandii</i>)</p> <p><i>B. microphylla</i> ('Compacta' & 'Winter Gem')</p> <p><i>B. sempervirens</i> 'Vardar Valley' [Gold Medal Award] & 'Graham Blandy' (a columnar cultivar for vertical accent)</p> <p><i>B. sinica</i> var. <i>insularis</i> ('Wintergreen')</p> <p>Cultivars of <i>B. microphylla</i> x <i>B. sempervirens</i> including 'Green Gem' & 'Green Velvet' [Gold Medal Award]</p> <p>(larger forms on evergreen tree information sheet)</p>	<p>Harland Boxwood</p> <p>Littleleaf Boxwood</p> <p>Vardar Valley Boxwood</p> <p>Graham Blandy Boxwood</p> <p>Korean Boxwood</p> <p>Hybrid Boxwood</p>	<p>Hedge, groups, or border; full sun to light shade; tolerate dry sites</p> <p>This species likes a soil pH of 6 or higher (more alkaline)</p>
<p><i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i> 'Duke Gardens' & 'Prostrata' [Gold Medal Award]</p>	<p>Japanese Plum Yew</p>	<p>Border or groups; full sun to full shade; tolerate dry sites</p>
<p><i>Ilex glabra</i>* & cultivars: 'Densa' [Gold Medal Award], Nordic ('Chamzin'), 'Shamrock' (the most compact form), & 'Compacta' - more open at the base like the species.</p> <p><i>I. opaca</i>* 'Maryland Dwarf' ('Clarendon Spreading' is another dwarf – less dense habit)</p>	<p>Inkberry Holly</p> <p>Maryland Dwarf Holly</p>	<p>Hedge, groups, border, or naturalistic use; full sun to light shade in moist or periodically wet sites</p> <p>Border; full sun to part shade; tolerates dry sites</p>
<p><i>Juniperus chinensis</i> 'Saybrook Gold' & <i>J. x media</i> 'Plumosa Aurea'</p> <p><i>J. sabina</i> 'Broadmoor' (low spreading form) & 'Shimpaku' (vase-shaped, informal habit)</p> <p>Note: less than 2 feet tall but not grown in a dense fashion like most groundcovers –</p> <p><i>J. squamata</i> 'Blue Star' & <i>J. procumbens</i> 'Greenmound'</p>	<p>Golden Juniper Cultivars</p> <p>Green Juniper Cultivars</p>	<p>Border or groups; need good drainage & tolerate dry sites</p> <p>'Blue Star' & 'Greenmound' – do not crowd them</p>

<i>Leucothoe fontanesiana</i> *	Drooping Leucothoe	Border or naturalistic use; light shade to part shade
<i>Pinus parviflora</i> dwarf & slow-growing cultivars including 'AOI', 'Cleary', 'Glauca Nana', & 'Koko-no-e' ('Kokonoe')	Dwarf Japanese White Pine Cultivars	Border; full sun; tolerates dry sites (needs good drainage but easier to grow than the following)
<i>P. strobus</i> * dwarf cultivars such as 'Blue Jay' & 'Merrimack' (larger forms on evergreen tree information sheet)	Dwarf Eastern White Pine Cultivars	Border; full sun; good performers on well-drained, north-facing slope at Green Spring, but in level sites these dwarf forms have died when fairly young (fungal pathogens)
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> cultivars: most have green foliage including 'Mt. Vernon' (the shortest form). 'Marbled White' ('Castlewellan') has variegated foliage.	Cherry Laurel Cultivars	Border, groups, or hedge; full sun (moist site) to full shade; tolerates dry sites
<i>Rhododendron</i> hybrids & cultivars (Gable, Girard, Glenn Dale, Kurume, & Robin Hill Hybrids; Encore hybrids also look promising)	Hybrid Evergreen Azaleas	Border or groups; light shade to part shade; vary from dwarf to large-sized, depending upon the cultivar
<i>Rhododendron carolinianum</i> (native to NC, SC, & TN) Heat tolerant hybrids such as 'Ken Janeck'	Carolina Rhododendron Heat Tolerant Hybrid Rhododendrons	Border or groups; light shade to part shade; rhododendrons are harder to grow in our area than azaleas; contact the local American Rhododendron Society for other good cultivars
<i>Sarcococca hookeriana</i> [var. <i>humilis</i> - Gold Medal Award; dense spreading habit – excellent groundcover] <i>S. orientalis</i> (<i>S. hookeriana</i> var. <i>digyna</i>) is a taller plant that is more shrub-like	Sarcococca, Sweet Box	Light shade to full shade; fragrant spring flowers

Non-Native Plants in Nurseries to Avoid Due to Exotic Invasive Potential (heavy reseeding):

Mahonia bealei (leatherleaf mahonia). For people who like the winter flowers of this plant, *Mahonia x media* 'Underwood' & 'Winter Sun' have not reseeded at Green Spring (these hybrids are less hardy, though – site carefully).

Nandina domestica (nandina) - fruiting forms reseeding in woodland areas at Green Spring & very weedy in some local gardens. The small, non-showy cultivar 'Moon Bay' has not set fruit at Green Spring.

A Note about Scientific Names:

Current names are from the **International Plant Names Index** (IPNI; www.ipni.org/index.html) and/or the **USDA PLANTS Database** (<http://plants.usda.gov/>; this website also has many photographs of native plants). If a second scientific name is given, it is usually an old name that is still seen in some references or used by some nurseries. The **Missouri Botanical Garden** is also an excellent reference for plant names, gardening information, and photographs: the **Kemper Center for Home Gardening Plantfinder** features plants in their Kemper Center display gardens and is one of my favorite websites about ornamental plants (www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/alpha.asp). Another resource is their plant name database for plants throughout the world at **w³TROPICOS** (<http://mobot.mobot.org/W3T/Search/vast.html>).

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