

7 Reasons to Plant Native Conifers

1 Keep Clean Water Clean

Evergreen conifer canopy intercept rain and clean water of potential contamination.

A typical medium-sized tree can intercept as much as 2,380 gallons of rainfall each year. This allows clean water to stay clean and prevent negative effects across our marine and freshwater environments from chemicals, and nutrients that can be picked up and deposited in our lakes, rivers, streams, and waterways. Conifers and evergreens intercept more rainfall than deciduous trees during winter months since they retain their needles and leaves.

2 Stabilize Slopes

Conifers stabilize slopes and prevent mudslides for hundreds of years.

Most conifers, as well as other trees, are great at anchoring slopes because of their extensive root structures. Root systems of mature trees can be two to three times as wide as the canopy of the tree. Conifers are long-lived and thrive in poor-to-moderate soil and hilly terrain so that when planted correctly, they can stabilize slopes and prevent soil erosion. Canopy coverage can reduce rain intensity 15% to 20% under a tree compared to an open area, which can increase soil stabilization.



3 Feed Birds Naturally

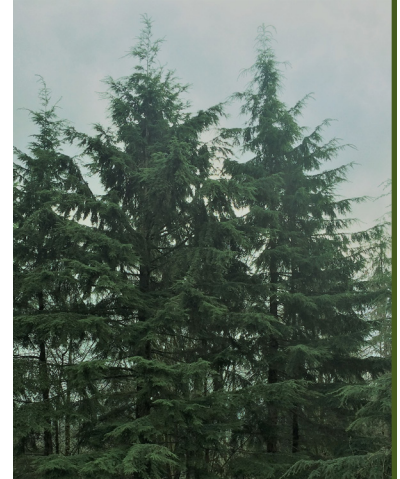
Naturally sustaining wildlife, conifers are easy and efficient bird feeders.

Chickadees, wood warblers, and nuthatches dine on tiny insects they find in conifer branches, bark, and cones. Finches forage for seed they find in broken cones. Berry-eaters like bluebirds, robins, and thrushes—feast on the fruit seed cones of juniper and yew. Snags (dead trees left in place) when not in a hazardous location can provide long-lasting habitat and food sources for wildlife as fungi and organisms work to break them down.

4 Maintain Privacy

Properly placed conifers provide a living privacy screen.

Many conifers, such as our native hemlocks and cedars, have thick evergreen foliage and low, sweeping branches that can block unwanted sightlines. Consider using other native shrubs, that can replace commonly used invasive plants such as English laurel and holly. This barrier can also serve to be effective at noise reduction as well.



5 Clean the Air

Conifers clean the air and reduce carbon.

Not only do conifers have a pleasant aromatic scent, but they also cleanse the air by trapping dust and other pollutants in their dense foliage. As with all trees and woody shrubs, they store carbon and give off oxygen.

6 Reduce Carbon Footprint

Conifers reduce your carbon footprint and energy costs.

A tall conifer provides shade in the summer and a windbreak in the winter. Most of our prevailing winds in this region are from the south, so a windbreak in the winter can reduce heating costs. Trees to the south and west of a home can also provide shade in hot summer months to increase comfort.

7 Reduce Maintenance

Conifers add interest and structure while being low maintenance.

Northwest conifers have added elegance to formal gardens for centuries since the 19th-century explorer and plant collector David Douglas send seed cones back to England's Kew Royal Botanic Garden. Conifers vary in height, color, texture and offer year-long interest even in the winter while being well-adapted to our maritime climate. Loving coastal fog and rain, once established after a few years' trees require little to no maintenance. Choose the right conifer for size and shape and almost no pruning will be required.