

Plant Selections for Screen Plantings

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Evergreen medium shrubs

Grey Owl Eastern Redcedar, *Juniperus virginiana* 'Grey Owl' – Soft blue gray foliage with horizontal wide spreading branches reaching 6-8' high x 6-8' wide, sometimes larger. Zone 4

Pfitzer Juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* 'Pfitzeraiana' – With time can reach 8-10' tall and twice as wide. Drought tolerant once established. Zone 4/5

Japanese Cedar, *Cryptomeria japonica* – 'Globosa Nana' slow growing dense round dwarf form maturing to 5-8' tall 2/3 as wide. 'Gyokuryu' is a dense broad multi leader pyramid form that grow 10-15' tall and half as wide. When young looks like 'Globosa Nana' but in a few years form multi leaders. Sometimes sold under the name Magic Dragon. Full sun to partial shade. Zone 5/6

Camellia – Fall Blooming Hardy Camellias. The following hybrids are National Arboretum introductions recommends as being hardy to zone 6b. 'Polar Ice', 'Snow Flurry', 'Winter's Hope', 'Winter's Rose', 'Winters Star', and 'Winter's Charm' are a few. Partial shade is best, require good drainage, prefer acid soil.

Nandina, *Nandina domestica* – Size ranges between 1-7' depending on cultivar. Sun to shade. Tough as nails. In some areas seeding can be an issue and use may be banned. Seedless cultivars are available. Zone 6

Leatherleaf Mahonia, *Mahonia bealei* – The 6-8" long leaves compound leaves with leathery spine-tipped leaflets. Bright yellow flowers open in wide spreading clusters in late winter, dark blue berries in spring. Spreads from seed where happy. Slow growing, 5-10' tall. Prefers shade, acidic moist soil. Develops chlorosis in high pH soils. Sulks in hot dry soil and desiccating wind. In some areas seeding can be a issue and uses may be banned. 'Charity' and 'Winter Sun' (zone 7) are two hybrids that have large compound leaf and produce many flowers. Other species hardiness varies. *Mahonia eurybracteata* 'Soft Caress' sold has zone 7 has not been reliably hardy in all but the warmest parts (Memphis) of TN. Zone 6

Japanese Aucuba, *Aucuba japonica* – Many cultivars, some with solid green leaves, others, leaves dusted with gold spots. 4-8' tall, requires good drainage. Best in shade, but green forms tolerate more sun in cooler regions. Leaf injury may occur at zero. Zone 6b to 7

Viburnum x burkwoodii 'Conoy' - makes a dense evergreen shrub with lustrous dark green leaf. It produces dark pink flower buds that open to creamy white in April. Matures to 5-6'. Drought tolerant once established. A good substitute for boxwoods and little leaf hollies. Zone 5. Pearlific™ is a new hybrid developed by Mike Dirr that is similar to 'Conoy' but produces more flowers and has stronger stems.

Small Viburnum, *Viburnum obovatum* – A good substitute for boxwoods and little leaf hollies with small white flower clusters. Wet to dry soil, sun or shade. Size ranges from 3-9' depending on cultivar. Native, Zone 6

Evergreen large shrub/small tree

Japanese Cleystera, *Cleyera japonica* – actually *Ternstroemia gymnanthera* but sold as *Cleyera japonica*. 6-15' tall depending on cultivar. Requires good drainage. Prefers afternoon shade but takes full sun or shade. Zone 7
Spring planting is recommended to help insure hardiness.

Anise-shrub/tree, *Illicium parviflorum* – Considered by many to be the most rugged of the *Illiciums*. 8 to 10' tall and wide, new growth is a beautiful soft yellow green becoming olive green with age. Foliage has pleasant anise odor when crushed. Performs well in average to moist sites. Best in part shade but will grow in full sun or shade. Older plants may sucker, forming dense masses. Unfortunately other species are sometime sold as *I. parviflorum* and do not perform as well in the long term. The cultivar 'Florida Sunshine' has chartreuse foliage in the spring and summer and brightens to brilliant screaming yellow in the fall. It will reach 5' tall and 3' wide in 5 years. Native to Georgia, Alabama and Florida. Insect and disease free. Zone 6

Florida Anise-tree, *Illicium floridanum* – 6 to 10' tall, Part sun to shade. Foliage yellows in full sun. 'Halley's Comet' produces deep red flowers over a long period of time. 'Semmes' is a white heavy-flowering form. Best grown in moist soil with high organic matter. Will even grow well in wet soil. Not as good a performer in West Tennessee as *Illicium parviflorum*. Zone 6

False Cypress, *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Vintage Gold' - We have found 'Vintage Gold' to be one of the best conifers to hold vivid gold color all summer in high heat regions. Makes a handsome pyramid with graceful pendulous branches. Mature size is unknown but expect it to reach 10' tall and 4' wide at the base in 5 to 6 years. Certainly gets much larger than stated by most plant labels and literature. Zone 4

False Cypress, *Chamaecyparis* 'Crippsii' – With age, Crippsii forms a beautiful broad pyramid of golden yellow layered branches which change to green within the plant. Reaches 10-15' tall. Foliage is soft and ferny in appearance. Best in some afternoon shade and supplemental water. Zone 5

Japanese Cedar, *Cryptomeria japonica* – 'Gyokuryu' is a dense broad multi leader pyramid form that grow 10-15' tall and half as wide. When young looks like 'Globosa Nana' but in a few years forms multi leaders. Sometimes sold under the name Magic Dragon. Full sun to partial shade. Zone 5/6

Foster Holly, *Ilex x attenuate* 'Fosteri' – This pyramidal holly can reach 20-25'tall. Small glossy green leaves. Females can produce heavy loads of red berries when a male is planted nearby. Commonly found planted to close to the corners of homes to soften the structure. A cross between two native species of holly. Zone 6

Ilex x 'Mary Nell' – 3 ½" long glossy deep green spiny leaves and bright red fruit. Requires some pruning to encourage dense habit. Slow growing. Needs no male to set fruit. Zone 6b

Ilex x 'Nellie R. Stevens' – Lustrous dark green leaves, abundant fruit production. Fast growing, broad pyramidal shape, 15' to 25' tall and 10-12' wide. Requires a male holly such as *Ilex cornuta* (Chinese Holly) for proper pollination and fruit set. Drought and heat tolerant. Zone 6

Ilex x 'Emily Brunner' – Broad dense pyramidal shape, 15-20' tall. Requires nitrogen to maintain dark green foliage. 'James Swan' is the male pollinator Zone 7

Prague Viburnum, *Viburnum x pragense* – Fast growing evergreen viburnum. Growth extensions are sometimes so vigorous pruning may be needed to achieve a denser plant. Full sun to part shade. Upright oval to 10' Zone 5

Loropetalum or Chinese Fringe Flower, *Loropetalum chinense* – Full sun to part shade. Semi-evergreen, the colder the winter the more leaves it loses. Height varies from 2' to 15' depending on cultivar. The cultivar 'Zhuzhou Fuchsia' is a good choice that gets 8 x 15'. May receive injury to wood at 0 Fahrenheit. Spring planting is recommended to help insure hardiness. Zone 6b-7

Carolina Cherrylaurel, *Prunus caroliniana* –Bright n' Tight™ also sold as 'Compacta', a good fruitless selection, 10-15 'tall. Straight species gets taller. Full sun to partial shade. Requires good drainage. Zone 7

Common Cherrylaurel, *Prunus laurocerasus* – Needs well drained soil in sun or shade. Prone to root rot in poorly drained soil. Sometimes affected by a disease producing multiple circular holes in the leaves, called shot hole disease, but only noticeable when up-close and not detrimental to the plant. Overhead irrigation encourages the disease. Borers also seem to be becoming more of a problem. 10 to 15' tall. 'Otto Luyken' – is a common compact free flowering form. 3 to 5' and 6' wide. Zone 6

Yaupon Holly, *Ilex vomitoria* – Averages 15' tall. Performs well in dry or wet soil. Shade tolerant. 'Pendula' known as Weeping Yaupon Holly will reach 10 to 15' tall. Zone 7

Hollywood Juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* 'Torulosa' / 'Kaizuka' – Branches twist and turn giving it a unique artistic appearance. 20' tall and 10 wide. Drought tolerant once established. Zone 5

Thorny Elaeagnus, *Elaeagnus pungens* – Develops long shoots giving it a wild and wooly effect, but the shoots eventually bend and become part of the mounded form, 10' to 15' tall and wide. If planted near a tree, shoots will "climb". Small flowers with a gardenia-like fragrance are produced in the fall. Good in floral arrangements. A fast growing, tough plant, adaptable to most soils. **Banned from production and sale in TN.** Zone 6
Elaeagnus ebbingei is still available and is very similar. Olive Martini™ is a hybrid variegated form of E. ebbingeri.

Southern Waxmyrtle, *Myrica cerifera* – A rather open fine textured evergreen, 10-15' tall and wide. Pruning increases density if needed. Sun or shade, dry or wet soils. Tolerant of poor soil but responds tremendously to water and fertilizer. Foliage has pleasant bayberry fragrance. 'Hiwassee' is a good hardy form for TN. Native to the Southeastern US. Branches may snap from ice or strong wind, but regrow quickly. Winter weather may cause foliage burn. Zone 7

Red-Tip Photinia, *Photinia x fraseri* – Over-planted in the south through the 80's and 90's. Often defoliated, sometimes killed by entomosporium leaf spot, also subject to fireblight and mildew. The cultivar 'Kentucky' is reportedly resistant to entomosporium leaf spot. If you have a red-tip that has never had leaf spot you may have 'Kentucky' and not realize it. Unfortunately they are rarely sold with a cultivar name. Zone 7 Chinese or Oriental Photinia, *Photinia serrulata* (zone 6) is resistant to Entomosporium leaf spot but difficult to find.

Chinese Privet, *Ligustrum sinense* –A noxious weed in the south. 'Pendulum' a weeping form is often used. 'Variegatum' a variegated form, tends to revert back to green. Green branches must be pruned out or they will dominate the plant. Seedlings from 'Pendulum' and 'Variegatum' will revert to the weedy green form. 'Sunshine' is a beautiful gold sterile form that has not been approved for sale in TN as of yet. **The species and all its cultivars are banned from production and sale in TN.** Zone 6

Japanese Privet, *Ligustrum japonicum* – 6-12' high and wide Zone 7

Waxleaf Ligustrum, Glossy Privet – *Ligustrum lucidum*- Where truly winter hardy can reach 20' tall. Zone 8, 7 with protection. Damage occurs at 0 degrees.

Evergreen Trees

Western or Giant Arborvitae, *Thuja plicata* – a good substitute for Leyland cypress. Endless cultivars. ‘Green Giant’ has lustrous rich green summer foliage taking on yellow green tones in the winter. Narrow pyramid to 30 – 40’. ‘Spring Grove’ thought to be the same as ‘Green Giant’ ‘Excelsa’ fast-growing loose pyramidal form with bright green in summer foliage but discolors in winter. Native to the western US. Zone 5

Japanese Cedar, *Cryptomeria japonica* – Large fast growing pyramidal or conical tree. Winter leaves may take on a bronzy hue. ‘Tarheel Blue’, ‘Radicans’ ‘Winter Mint’ and ‘Yoshino’ tend to have better winter color. Some reports of branch dieback, particularly in the Southeast. There are 100 or more cultivars of Japanese cedar. Many are dwarf so pay attention to the label. Full sun to partial shade. Zone 5/6

Arizona Cypress, *Cupressus arizonica* – Medium size pyramidal fine textured tree, beautiful blue/gray foliage. Medium to fast growth rate. ‘Carolina Sapphire’ and ‘Blue Ice’ are popular cultivars. ‘Limelight’ and ‘Golden Pyramid’ are beautiful golden forms. Adaptable to poor soil but requires good drainage. Can be short lived. Native to Arizona Zone 6b

Southern Magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora* – Dense pyramid. Slow to medium growth rate, but much faster when given extra water and fertilizer. Large creamy white, fragrant flowers, produced in May and June. Best to allow branches to grow to the ground to hide leaf litter and to alleviate the problem of trying to grow something under it which can be a challenge due to shallow root system. Over 100 cultivars on the market, some of which are compact and useful in smaller landscapes. Seedlings are often inferior and slow to bloom. Tolerates wet soils. Native to southeastern US. Full sun to part shade. Zone 6

Southern Magnolia cultivars:

‘D.D. Blanchard’ - very nice pyramidal form – lustrous dark green leaves with rich orangey brown undersides. ‘Bracken’s Brown Beauty’ - lustrous dark green leaves and attractive rusty brown undersides. One of the most cold hardy cultivars. ‘Southern Charm’ sold under the trade mark name Teddy Bear® - similar to ‘Little Gem’ supposedly 20’ tall and 12’ wide at maturity. ‘Little Gem’ - excellent dwarf cultivar. Small leaves are about 4” long and lustrous dark green with a bronzy brown underside. ‘Little Gem’ produces 4-6” flowers at a very young age and flowers May through October, with a lull during the hottest months. Little Gem can reach 20’ high by 10’ wide in 20 years. With light pruning it can be used off the corner of a house as a foundation planting to substitute for holly or other evergreen. ‘Kay Parris’ similar to “Little Gem’. Other good cultivars include ‘Alta’- very narrow growing, ‘Claudia Wannamaker’- full size tree, ‘Hasse’- narrow growing, ‘Edith Bogue’ – half as wide as tall and Greenback™ – narrow tightly branched, parent plant is 30 by 12’.

Sweetbay Magnolia, *Magnolia virginiana* – A small multi-stemmed deciduous semi-evergreen to evergreen tree. Growth is medium to fast. The leaves are green to blue green silvery underside. Lemon scented, 2-3” creamy white flowers, produced in May and June. Grows well in moist, even swampy soil in full sun or shade. A few selections are truly evergreen while others are semi-evergreen to deciduous. *Magnolia virginiana* var. *australis* and the cultivars ‘Henry Hicks’ ‘Green Shadow’ and ‘Greenbay’ are evergreen in Tennessee. Native to Eastern US. Zone 5/6

American Holly, *Ilex opaca* – Problematic - foliage color is often unsatisfactory. Slow growing and can be picky about soil. Intolerant of wet soil in cultivation. If planting, choose a named cultivar as apposed to a seed grown plant. Zone 5

Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* – Tolerant of poor soil, but not wet. Native, widespread, and should be more popular. Part shade to full sun, but best in full sun. Medium growth rate in youth, slows with age

eventually reaching 30-50' tall. Growth habit widely variable, some being broad, others very slender. Many cultivars available ranging widely in sizes. Female plants with small blue "berries". Zone 3b

Leyland Cypress, *X Cupressocyparis leylandii* – Not reliable in West Tennessee. Leyland Cypress is very susceptible to seiridium canker, and botryosphaeria dieback. No cure, no preventive, though stressed plants are more susceptible.

Hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis* and *Tsuga caroliniana* – a wonder conifer for cooler parts of the US. Unfortunately with the introduction of the woolly adelgid best not to planted. Zone 4

A few deciduous plants that contribute to screening

Forsythia, *Forsythia x intermedia* – average size reaching 6 x 8' if left unpruned. Should not be meatballed. Flowers best in full sun but will grow in shade. Adaptable to most soils. Branches allowed to touch the ground may root and form a thicket over time. Zone 5/6

Japanese Kerria or Yellow Rose of Texas, *Kerria japonica* – Bright yellow flowers open in April and May. Produces a twiggy mass of slender yellow green stems. Averages 4-6' tall and 6-9' wide with time. Often suckers and will produce large colonies if left unchecked. Performs well in full to part shade. Flowers and foliage bleach out in hot afternoon sun in the south. Double flowering cultivar 'Pleniflora' is often found at old house sites. Zone 4b

Evergreen Vines

Crossvine, *Bignonia capreolata*, Zone 5/6

Carolina jessamine, *Gelsemium sempervirens* Zone 6

Trumpet Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens* 'Major Wheeler', 'Alabama Crimson' Zone 4

Evergreen Plants for a narrow spot

Thuja occidentalis 'Degroot's Spire' 6-12' x 3' if pruned to a central leader

Thuja occidentalis 'Emerald', 'Emerald Green' ('Smaragd') 10-15' x 3-4' hold color well in winter

Chamaecyparis nootkatensis / *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis* 'Green Arrow' 25' x 5' 'Van den Akker' 25' x 3'

Ilex crenata 'Sky Pencil' 6- 10' x 12-24" requires good drainage

Ilex vomitoria 'Will Fleming' 15' x 18" with age needs to be tied to prevent splaying

Buxus sempervirens 'Dee Runk' 10' x 3' requires good drainage

Buxus sempervirens 'Graham Blandy' 9' x 1 ½ - 2' requires good drainage

Juniperus virginiana 'Taylor' 3-4' x 20-30' zone 3

Juniperus communis 'Gold Cone' 9' x 3' requires good drainage, with age may need to be tied to prevent splaying

Juniperus communis 'Compressa' 5' x 12" requires good drainage, with age may need to be tied to prevent splaying

Deciduous Trees for a narrow spot

Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata'

Ginkgo biloba 'Fastigiata'

Liquidambar styraciflua 'Slender Silhouette'

Liriodendron tulipifera 'Arnold'

Quercus robur 'Long' Regal Prince® & Kindred Spirit®

Zelkova serrata 'Musashino'

Plants you should use with caution

Leyland Cypress due to canker and dieback. Spruce, fir, white pine and hemlock due to poor heat tolerance in parts of middle TN and all of west TN. Hemlock due to wooly adelgid. White pine in hot areas of the US. Michael Dirr provides a list of white pine alternatives for zones 7 and higher in his 2009 addition of Manual Woody Landscape Plants. Chinese Privet, *Ligustrum sinense* –A noxious weed in the south. Red tip photinia subject to disease, resulting in defoliation, sometimes death.