

Evergreen Shrubs for Kansas



Introduction

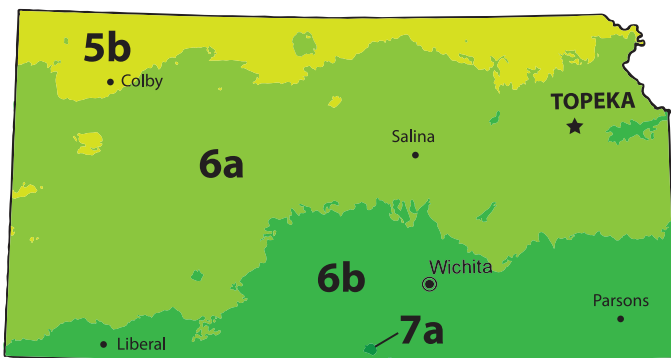
Evergreen shrubs offer winter landscape interest in Kansas. They provide structure, features, and color when deciduous plants lie dormant. Although evergreens tend to be rugged, adaptable plants, not all of them are suitable for Kansas because growing conditions vary widely across the state.

Eastern Kansas receives significantly more rainfall than western Kansas, where moisture is quite low. Most of the state falls within USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 6, except for the area along the Kansas-Nebraska border, which is in Zone 5, and a tiny area in south central Kansas located in Zone 7 (Figure 1). During the summer, high temperatures, strong winds, and lack of rainfall make it difficult for plants to survive. This publication, developed with the help of extension agents and gardeners, is intended to help you choose the best plants for your particular area. It includes

plants that survive, and even thrive under harsh conditions. Plants are organized by mature height: small (less than 5 feet tall), medium (5 to 10 feet), large (10 to 15 feet), and very large (more than 15 feet). Cultivar selections are based on performance and regional availability. Many plants can thrive statewide, but those suited to more extreme environments are also listed.

When making selections, look for plants recommended for your region (Figure 2). Keep in mind specific site challenges such as sun and wind exposure, moisture requirements, cold hardiness, and high soil pH, which can lead to nutrient deficiencies. Request a soil test, which can be obtained through your local K-State Research and Extension office. If you have trouble locating plants or cultivars, check with your local garden center. Ask if they can find it through their suppliers.

Plant Hardiness Zones



Average Annual Extreme Minimum Temperature

Zone 5b: -15° to -10° F (-26.1° to -23.3° C)

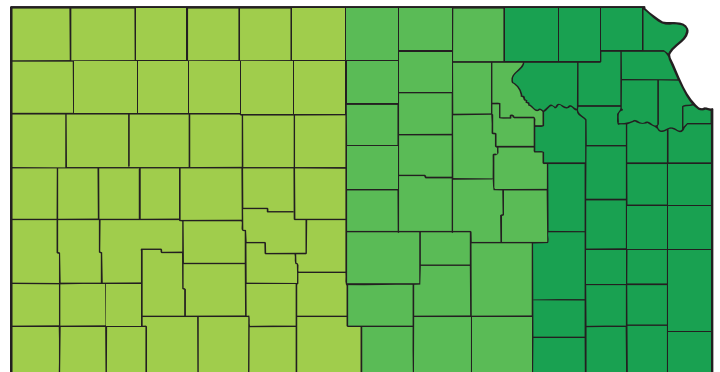
Zone 6a: -10° to -5° F (-23.3° to -20.6° C)

Zone 6b: -5° to 0° F (-20.6° to -17.8° C)

Zone 7a: 0° to 5° F (-17.8° to -15° C)

Figure 1. USDA Plant Hardiness Zone map for Kansas.

Kansas Area Map



West

Central

East

Figure 2. Map showing regions where specific cultivars perform best. See tables, pages 2–8.

Table 1: Small evergreen shrubs: less than 5 feet at maturity

Botanical Name or Cultivar	Common Name	Comments	Exposure	Season of Interest	Area
<i>Berberis x gladwynensis</i> 'William Penn'	William Penn Barberry	Small thorns. Dark-green leaves turn bronze-red in winter. Yellow flowers in April/May. Hardiness may be an issue in northern Kansas.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Winter, Spring	S, (W)
<i>Buxus microphylla</i>	Littleleaf Boxwood	Compact, mounded, densely branched. Used for hedges. May not hold green color in winter, but should not defoliate except in extreme conditions.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Winter	E, C
'Glencoe'	Chicagoland Green	Hybrid. Holds good winter color. Good cold hardiness.			
'Green Mountain'		Oval pyramid shape. Small, dark-green leaves.			
'Green Velvet'		Dense, slow growing.			
'Wintergreen'		Small, light green leaves.			
<i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i>	Bearberry Cotoneaster	Fast growing. Early growth is spreading, but branches grow up and make a dense shrub. May need pruning to maintain neatness. White flowers in May followed by small red fruit. Leaves may turn reddish purple in cold weather. Grows 1 to 1½ feet tall with a 6 foot spread.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Winter, Summer	E, C
'Coral Beauty'	Royal Beauty	Free-fruiting. Grows 2 to 2½ feet high.			
'Streib's Findling'		Leaves are dark blue/green with heavy crops of bright red fruit. Grows 4 to 6 inches high.			
<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	Red Yucca	While not a true shrub, it can perform the same function in the landscape. Better suited for the southern half of Kansas; thrives in hot, dry locations. Foliage is gray-green (2 feet tall) with a red spike of flowers in spring and early summer that can extend height to 5 feet.	Full sun	Winter, Spring, Summer	C, W
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry Holly	Native. Attractive black fruit. Has a tendency to lose leaves at the base of the plant.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Fall, Winter	E, C
'Chamzin'	Nordic	Grows 3 to 4 feet tall and wide. Quite cold hardy.			
'Nigra'		Compact (2½ feet tall and 3 feet wide). Leaves stay on the lower branches better than other cultivars.			
'Shamrock'		Denser than others, though older plants can get a bit leggy (long, stretched-out). Grows to 5 feet or slightly more.			
<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	White flowers borne on 4- to 6-inch long racemes give the plant a cascading effect from May through July. Great fall color. Semi-evergreen.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter	E, C
'Henry's Garnet'		Choice selection for flowering and reddish-purple fall color.			
'Sprich'	Little Henry	More compact than 'Henry's Garnet,' growing 3 to 4 feet tall. Inflorescences are 3 to 4 inches long.			
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	Chinese Juniper	Scale-like foliage, colors range from green to blue, sometimes tipped with yellow. Many cultivars and sizes.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Armstrongii'		3 to 4 feet tall; bright green.			
'Blue Vase'		4 to 5 feet tall, 3 to 4 feet wide with vase-shaped form.			
'Daub's Frosted'		2 feet tall, 4 feet wide. Low spreading form, gold frosted leaves with bluish undertones.			
'Kallay's Compacta'		2 to 3 feet tall, 6 feet wide.			
'San Jose'		12 to 24 inches tall, 6 to 8 feet wide. Creeping.			
'Saybrook Gold'	Saybrook Gold	2 to 3 feet tall, 6 feet wide. Bright yellow.			

Botanical Name or Cultivar	Common Name	Comments	Exposure	Season of Interest	Area
<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	Creeping Juniper	Low-growing, spreading groundcover form. Turns mauve-purple in winter.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Bar Harbor'		8 to 12 inches tall, 6 to 8 feet wide.			
'Blue Chip'		8 to 12 inches tall, 8 to 10 feet wide.			
'Hughes'		12 inches tall, 9 feet wide. Only a little purple in winter.			
'Wiltonii'	Blue Rug	4 to 6 inches tall, 6 to 8 feet wide.			
<i>Juniperus procumbens</i>	Japgarden Juniper	Spreading groundcover form. Turns purple in winter.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Greenmound'		8 inches tall, 6 feet wide. Slight mounding habit in the middle.			
'Nana'		2 feet tall, 10 feet wide.			
'Variegata'		White variegation in foliage.			
<i>Juniperus sabina</i> 'Broadmoor'	Savin Juniper	Groundcover juniper. Resistant to juniper blight. Grows 2 to 3 feet tall, 10 to 15 feet wide.	Full Sun	Winter	S
<i>Juniperus squamata</i>	Singleseed Juniper	Dwarf, mounding, groundcover-type. Grows well in dry soils. Cultivars have blue-tinged foliage.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Blue Carpet'		Grows 8 to 12 inches tall and 4 to 5 feet wide.			
'Blue Star'		Grows 3 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide.			
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> 'Grey Owl'	Eastern Redcedar	Eastern redcedar thrives statewide. Selected cultivars have exceptional ornamental characteristics. 'Grey Owl' has soft, silvery gray green foliage with lots of blue cones. Grows 3 feet tall, 6 feet wide.	Full Sun	Winter	S
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> 'Compactum'	Oregon Grapeholly	Thick, stiff, waxy leaves are dark green and glossy in the summer, may turn purple-bronze in winter. Bright yellow flowers in April, followed by grape-like berries in late summer. Needs protection and shade. Grows 2 to 3 feet tall and wide.	Part Shade	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter	(S)
<i>Nandina domestica</i>	Heavenly Bamboo	Best in southern Kansas as cold hardiness is an issue. Tri-pinnately compound leaves come in a variety of colors including green, red, purple, pink, and orange. Small, red fruit ripen in the fall and last through the winter. Leaf color may turn bronze in winter.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter	E, C
'AKA'	Blush Pink	New growth is rose-red; no flowering/fruit. Grows 3 feet tall and wide.			
'Gulf Stream'		Metallic, blue/green foliage in summer, red in winter. Grows 3 feet tall and wide.			
'Harbour Dwarf'		Can spread by rhizomes. Grows 2 feet tall by 3 feet wide.			
'Jaytee'	Harbor Belle	Blue-green summer foliage turns burgundy maroon in fall. Grows 18 to 24 inches tall.			
'Firepower'		Grows 2 feet tall and wide. Popular red selection.			
<i>Taxus x media</i>	Anglojap Yew	Leaves are somewhat succulent; female plants have matte-red cones. Yews require well-drained soil.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Summer, Winter	S, (W)
'Densifomis'		3 to 4 feet tall, 3 to 8 feet wide.			
'Everlow'		3 to 4 feet tall, 4 to 5 feet wide. Can be maintained at 1½ to 2 feet tall.			

Table Key

Exposure: Full Sun, Partial Sun/Shade, Full Shade.

Season of Interest: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

Area: Kansas region where the shrub grows best: E=Eastern, C=Central, W=Western, S=Statewide.

A parenthesis surrounding a letter indicates that the plant will perform better with some protection.

Botanical Name or Cultivar	Common Name	Comments	Exposure	Season of Interest	Area
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Eastern Arborvitae	Dwarf cultivars are included here, but some may eventually exceed the "under 5 feet" category. Otherwise, good selections with interesting traits.	Full Sun	Summer, Winter	S
'Congabe'		Slow-growing, rounded shape. Gold foliage tipped in red. Turns copper to brownish yellow in winter. Branches resemble 'Rheingold'.			
'Danica'		1 to 1½ feet tall. Glossy, emerald green foliage.			
'Golden Tuffet'		Mounded habit; golden orange threadlike foliage. Grows 4 to 6 feet tall.			
'Hetz Midget'		Dense, globe-shaped, rich green foliage. Grows 3 to 4 feet tall.			
'Linesville'		Compact globe-shaped, sage-green foliage. Grows 2 to 3 feet tall.			
'Little Giant'		Slow growing, ultimately reaching 1½ to 2 feet tall with rich green foliage.			
'Bobazam'	Mr. Bowling Ball	Soft, finely textured (feather-like), sage-green foliage. 2 to 3 feet.			
'Rheingold'		4 to 5 feet tall by 3 to 4 feet wide. Foliage is rich deep gold; winter color is copper to brownish yellow.			
<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	Adam's Needle Yucca	Not truly a shrub, but thrives in difficult situations, maintains an evergreen presence, and adds interesting texture to the landscape. Sword-shaped leaves. Creamy-white flowers in large inflorescences above the leaves in July and August. Large, persistent, green fruit.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Summer, Winter	S
'Color Guard'		Variiegated with creamy-white and yellow stripe on the leaves. Turns rose in cold weather.			

Table 2: Medium evergreen shrubs: 5 to 10 feet at maturity

Botanical name or cultivar	Common name	Comments	Exposure	Season of Interest	Area
<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>	Glossy Abelia	Semi-evergreen in cold winters. White/pink tubular flowers open on new growth from May to frost.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Summer, Fall, Winter	E, C
'Hopley's'	Twist of Lime	Gold margins, green centers on leaves. One of the most stable variegated forms.			
'Kaleidoscope'		Yellow/orange leaf margins with green centers, turns rose red in winter. White flowers.			
'Rose Creek'		Compact (grows 2 to 3 feet). May need pruning to maintain variegation. (Remove shoots that revert to original form.)			
<i>Euonymus kiautschovicus</i>	Spreading Euonymus	Great for hedges and screens.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Fall, Winter	S, (W)
'Manhattan'		Originated on the K-State campus, now ubiquitous in the nursery industry across the U.S. Round, glossy leaves. White flowers attract bees in July/August. Interesting fruit capsule ripens in October/November.			
'Paulii'		More upright than 'Manhattan' and possibly more cold hardy.			
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	Chinese Juniper	Scale-like foliage; colors range from green to blue, sometimes tipped with yellow. Many cultivars and sizes.	Full sun	Winter	S
'Angelica Blue'		5 to 6 feet tall, 10 feet wide. Blue.			
'Blue Point'		7 to 8 feet tall, 3 feet wide. Can be pruned into many shapes.			
'Hetzii Glauca'		5 to 7 feet tall.			
'Pfitzeriana'	Pfitzer	5 feet tall, 10 feet wide.			
'Pfitzeriana Aurea'	Gold Tip Pfitzer	5 feet tall, 10 feet wide. Leaves are gold-tipped.			
'Pfitzeriana Glauca'	Blue Pfitzer	5 feet tall, 10 feet wide. Blue.			
'Sea Green'		4 to 6 feet tall, 6 to 8 feet wide. Compact spreader.			
<i>Morella pennsylvanica</i> (formerly <i>Myrica pennsylvanica</i>)	Northern Bayberry	Dark-green leaves are aromatic (used to make candles). Plant is tolerant of sand and salt. Female plants have gray drupes clustered along the stem in winter.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Fall, Winter	E, C
<i>Taxus x media</i>	Anglojap Yew	Leaves are somewhat succulent; female plants have matte-red cones. Yews require well-drained soil.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Fall, Winter	S, (W)
'Runyan'		4 to 5 feet tall, 6 to 9 feet wide. Spreading.			

Table 3: Large evergreen shrubs: 10 to 15 feet at maturity

Botanical name or cultivar	Common name	Comments	Exposure	Season of Interest	Area
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Common Boxwood	Dense, green shrub good for hedges and screens. Cold hardiness and heat tolerance are issues.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Winter	E, C
'Arctic Emerald'		Columnar, pyramidal habit. One of the most cold hardy.			
'Dee Runk'		Columnar, nice green leaves.			
'Elegantissima'		Leaf margins are cream variegated.			
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	Chinese Juniper	Scale-like foliage, colors range from green to blue, sometimes tipped with yellow. Many cultivars and sizes from which to choose.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Hetzii Columnaris'		10 to 15 feet tall.			
'Iowa'		10 feet tall, 4 feet wide.			
'Robusta Green'		15 feet tall, 5 to 7 feet wide.			
'Wintergreen'		15 feet tall, 5 to 6 feet wide.			
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Redcedar	Improved selections of this native plant make excellent ornamentals that stay true to type.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Junction City'		New, but the cultivar comes from a plant in Junction City, Kansas. Columnar.			
'Manhattan Blue'		10 to 12 feet tall, 6 to 8 feet wide. Bluish-green foliage.			
<i>Taxus x media</i>	Anglojap Yew	Leaves are somewhat succulent, female plants have matte-red cones. Yews require well-drained soil.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Fall, Winter	S, (W)
'Brownii'		9 to 12 feet tall, 12 feet wide.			
<i>Viburnum rhytidophyllum</i>	Leatherleaf Viburnum	May be semi-evergreen in parts of Kansas. Leathery, puckered leaves are 3 to 7 inches long. Creamy, slightly fragrant flowers in May. Beautiful fruit mature from yellow to red to black. Need more than one plant for best fruiting. Heavy shade is best; plant in a protected spot.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter	E, C
<i>Viburnum x pragense</i>	Prague Viburnum	White flowers (pink buds) in April. Good cold hardiness.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter	E, C

Table 4: Very large evergreen shrubs: greater than 15 feet at maturity

Botanical name or cultivar	Common name	Comments	Exposure	Season of Interest	Area
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	Chinese Juniper	Scale-like foliage; colors range from green to blue, sometimes tipped with yellow. Many cultivars and sizes from which to choose.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Keteleeri'		15 to 20 feet tall.			
'Kaizuka' ('Torulosa')	Hollywood Juniper	20 feet tall.			
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Redcedar	Eastern Redcedar thrives statewide. Selected cultivars have exceptional ornamental characteristics.	Full Sun	Winter	S
'Brodie'		Grass-green foliage turns sage-green in the winter. Grows 20 to 25 feet tall, 4 to 6 feet wide.			
'Canaerti'		Tufted foliage, blue-green cones, pyramidal form. Grows to 20 feet tall.			
'Prairie Sentinel'		Dense, gray-green foliage. Upright, pyramidal habit. Grows 15 to 20 feet tall, 4 to 5 feet wide.			
'Taylor'		Upright, conical-columnar form. Grows 20 feet tall.			
<i>Taxus x media</i>	Anglojap Yew	Leaves are somewhat succulent, female plants have matte-red cones. Yews require well-drained soil.	Full Sun to Part Shade	Fall, WInter	S, (W)
'Hicksii'		15 to 20 feet tall, 5 to 8 feet wide. Columnar.			

Definitions

Drupe: a fleshy fruit whose seed is enclosed in a hard, non-opening shell.

Dwarf: an atypically small plant.

Hybrid: a plant resulting from a cross between two or more other plants that are more or less alike.

Inflorescence: the flower head type (a grouping of flowers vs. a single flower).

Native: inherent and original to an area.

Pedice: the small stalk bearing an individual flower in an inflorescence (can be in a cluster or solitary).

Raceme: a flower cluster with the separate flowers attached by short stalks at equal distances along a central stem.

Rhizome: an underground stem distinguishable from a root by presence of nodes, buds, or scale-like leaves.

Succulent: thickened, juicy, fleshy tissues that are more or less soft in texture.

Tubular: having petals, sepals, or both united into a tube.

Variiegated: striped, margined, or mottled with a color other than green, where green is normal.

Resources

Dirr, M.A. 2011. *Dirr's encyclopedia of trees and shrubs*. Timber Press (Portland, Ore.).

Dirr, M.A. 2009. *Manual of woody landscape plants: Their identification, ornamental characteristics, culture, propagation and uses*. 6th ed. Timber Press (Portland, Ore.).

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

MF3117

March 2014

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