Something Special About Yew

The finest evergreen for shady areas is rarely used in North Dakota. Why?

All of us plant shrubs around our home’s foundations. Throughout the Upper Midwest, it’s very common to plant yews (*Taxus* spp.) along the shady sides of homes.

Yet you don’t see many yews in North Dakota. It is an underutilized shrub, especially in urban areas.

Yew needles are deep green and lustrous; they contrast beautifully with the snow of winter. Yew is a beautiful shrub all by itself or can serve as an attractive background to shorter perennials. The red arils (seedpods) are brilliant and attract birds.

Yews are especially useful in shady areas—where other evergreens struggle. This makes them special!

Yews grow slowly, tolerate shearing and require minimal care when planted in the right spot.

They prefer moist soil and must have good drainage. Give them bark mulch to keep the soil cool and moist. Give them a drink of water in autumn before the ground freezes.

Yews struggle when exposed to high winds; so plant them near your home in a sheltered location. Yews do very well in urban sites and suffer from no serious pests (only deer).

Among the most popular cultivars, ‘Taunton’ yew shows superior resistance to heat and winter burn. ‘Morden’ yew shows superior hardiness (good in Zone 3). ‘Dark Green’ is noted for deep green needles. ‘Nana’ is a dwarf form.

The next time you are looking for a shrub for a shady spot, consider what other gardeners in the Upper Midwest have discovered: Yews are superstars in the shade and provide year-round beauty.

Yews have glossy green needles and bright red seedpods. ‘Taunton’ (left bottom) resists winter burn and ‘Dark Green’ (right bottom) has deep green needles.
Plant Health Care

Fruits and Vegetables

Grow Garlic
Add 1 inch of compost or peat moss and 2.5 lbs of 10–10–10 per 100 ft. Set cloves 2–3 inches deep; space 4–6 inches apart in rows 12–24 inches apart. Irrigate. Mulch when ground freezes.

Harvesting Pears
Harvest before fully mature. Pick when its skin changes from dark green to yellowish green; its skin texture begins to feel waxy and smooth; and spots on the skin change from white to brown.

Sooty Blotch and Flyspeck
Fungi create smudges and clusters of tiny dots. Fruits are edible. Prune next March to open canopy and prevent disease. Pick up these trimmings (the fungi may be on twigs). Fungicides can help next year.

Harvesting Winter Squash
Harvest before a killing frost (28°F). Leave at least one inch of stem. Wipe but don’t wash fruit. Except for acorns, cure in a warm (80°F) spot for 10 days to toughen skin for long-term storage.

Harvesting Pumpkin
Light frosts will not harm the fruit, but harvest before a killing frost (28°F). Leave a few inches of stem attached. Do not bruise. Cure in a warm (80°F) spot for 10 days for long-term storage.

Prune Raspberries
Remove canes that bore fruit this summer; prune at ground level. Thin remaining canes now or in March. If grown in a hedge, thin canes to 3–4 inches apart. If grown in hills, thin to 6–8 canes per hill.

Drought Worsens
Updated September 4: Most (83%) of North Dakota remains dry. Moderate drought conditions rose from 26 to 42% of the state last week. Irrigation can benefit drought-sensitive plants.

Slow Ripening Tomatoes
Be patient. Optimal ripening temps are 68–77°F. The more temps stray from this range, the slower ripening occurs. Clipping vines won’t help. Tomatoes with a blush may ripen indoors.

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Plant Health Care

Flowers

**Plant Mums**
Plant ASAP. Mulch after the ground freezes. It’s better to plant mums in spring to allow time for establishment. Select hardy, early blooming cultivars.

**Slugs on Hosta**
Mature plants will tolerate damage late in the season. Iron phosphate baits may be used, if needed. Diatomaceous earth may be sprinkled around garden edge.

Lawns

**Divide/Transplant Peony**
Do this ASAP, if needed. Cut stems to the ground and dig up roots. Shake off the soil and cut the crown into sections. Each section needs 3–5 eyes and a strong root system. Space new sections 2–3 feet apart, with eyes only 1–2 inches deep. Mulch after ground freezes.

**Sow Seed**
Sow seed ASAP to allow seedlings sufficient time to get established before winter. Prepare seed bed, fertilize and keep soil moist until seedlings emerge.

**Lay Sod**
Cultivate soil and apply 4–8 pounds/1000 ft² starter fertilizer. Stagger sod pieces like laying bricks. Fill gaps with soil. Stake if needed to keep in place. Keep moist for 1–2 weeks.

**Boxelder bugs**
Bugs are swarming and may gather on sunny walls to stay warm. Seal crevices along doors and windows. Spray bugs with 5 tablespoons of liquid detergent per gallon of water.

**Planting Trees in Fall**
Plant trees early enough to allow several weeks of root growth and recovery. Ideal planting dates are shown. Chances of success diminish later in the year, particularly with evergreens.

**Fall Needle Drop**
We don’t worry when old leaves change color and drop. Likewise, don’t worry when old needles, located near the trunk, change color and drop. They are supposed to drop. As long as young needles (near branch tips) are healthy, the tree is fine.
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NDSU Yard & Garden Report  September 10, 2018

Weather Almanac for September 2–8, 2018

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**DAYLENGTH** (Sep 10, McClusky, center of ND)2

- **Sunrise:** 7:12 AM
- **Daylength:** 12h 54m
- **Sunset:** 8:06 PM
- **Change since Sep 3:- 23m**

**LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS3**

- **Sep 15-19:** Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal
- **Sep 17-23:** Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

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1,4 Rain data begin April 1. GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F., respectively.

2 Sources: North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, and National Weather Service, respectively.

3 The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is implied.

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Credits

Sources:


Written by Tom Kalb, who expresses gratitude to the NDSU educators who contributed to this report: Craig Askim, Greg Benz, Beth Burdolski, Carrie Knutson, Marissa Leier, Esther McGinnis, Megan Vig and Joe Zeleznik.

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