

Best Time to Plant Evergreen Trees (2025) - Practical Checklist

Use this booklet to pick the right week, not just the right month. Match timing to climate, soil temperature, and forecast, then follow the shock-reduction steps and first-30-days plan for higher survival and faster rooting.

Timing by Climate

Cold winter climates - early spring after soil thaws but before heat sets in, or early to mid fall to allow rooting before hard freeze.

Mild climates - fall is prime for rooting under cool air and warm soil; spring is second-best before consistent heat arrives.

Hot-summer interiors - plant fall or very early spring; avoid late spring to mid-summer windows unless using shade and strict watering.

Soil Temperature Targets

Aim for soil at 6 inches depth around 45 - 60 F for conifer root growth; avoid frozen or waterlogged soil.

If soil is below 40 F, rooting is slow; if above 70 F with dry wind, transpiration outpaces new roots.

Probe moisture at 3 - 4 inches; postpone planting if soil crumbles to dust or is saturated and sticky.

Spring vs Fall - Pros and Cons

Spring advantages - longer establishment runway into summer; easier access to stock and crews.

Spring cautions - heat waves arrive fast; plan irrigation and temporary shade for new installs.

Fall advantages - cool air and warm soil favor roots with lower stress; fewer weeds and less watering.

Fall cautions - plant early enough for roots to knit before the ground freezes; water until freeze-up in dry falls.

Heat, Drought, and Rain Rules

Skip planting during heat advisories or when highs exceed about 85 - 90 F for several days. Under drought restrictions, schedule for cooler weeks and set a first-30-days watering plan in writing.

Avoid planting in waterlogged conditions or right before multi-inch rain events that compact soil.

Stock Type and Timing

Container-grown stock - slightly wider timing window; handle gently to avoid circling roots.
B and B (balled and burlapped) - best in early spring or early fall; heavier and more sensitive to heat and drought.

Bare root (rare for evergreens) - tight window in very early spring when fully dormant.

Go / No-Go Weather Checklist

Go if forecast shows 7 - 10 days of moderate highs, light winds, and no major storms.

No-Go if a heat wave, high winds, or a hard freeze is forecast within 72 hours.

Borderline - proceed with added shade cloth and early-morning irrigation if highs are near threshold.

Shock-Reduction Steps on Planting Day

Plant early in the day; keep roots shaded and moist until set in the ground.

Hole width 2 - 3x root-ball diameter; set root flare at or slightly above finished grade.

Water-in thoroughly; create a 2 - 3 inch mulch ring kept a few inches off the trunk.

Stake only if windy exposure or unstable ball; remove supports after about 12 months.

First 30 Days Aftercare

Week 1 - water every 2 - 3 days; Weeks 2 - 4 - water twice per week; adjust for rain, soil, and wind.

Inspect needles or leaves for wilt, scorch, or sudden color shifts; adjust watering cadence accordingly.

Keep mulch depth at 2 - 3 inches; keep it off the trunk; avoid fertilizing at planting.

Scheduling & Warranty Tips

Book crews ahead of peak weeks; request morning installs and a cool-weather window if possible.

Get warranty terms and first-season care notes in writing; keep a simple watering log.

Photograph the specimen at delivery and after planting to document condition for claims.