

Strategically Located Trees Can Dull Winter's Chill



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When the cold winter winds whip across our faces or whistle under our eaves, we might think of how we can aesthetically institute an abatement program for the winters still ahead. Strategically located trees of the right kind can be one effective way to get some help. Because wind chill has a cooling effect on more than just our ears and fingers, it can also increase the cost of staying warm even indoors in the wintertime. A dense line of specifically selected plant material on the windward side of your residence may not only provide a visual/privacy barrier year-round but as well may significantly diminish the heat loss impact of those winter winds.

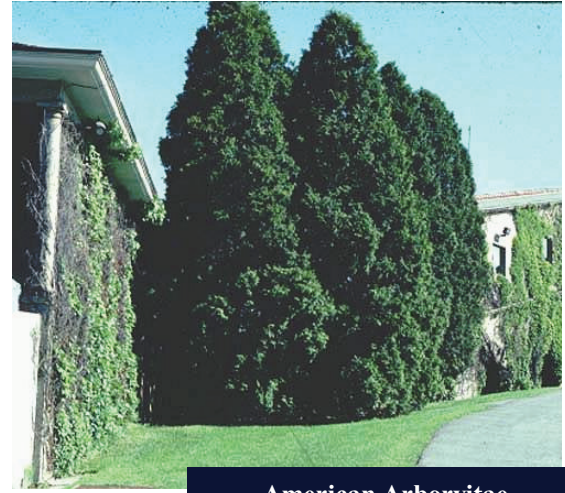
If you have good sunlight on the west to north sides and the horizontal and vertical room for it there, a row of Chinese weeping privet (*Ligustrum sinense pendula*) is a fine answer both as a privacy and wind screen. It may take three years or so to gain an effective height of six-plus feet and characteristic density, but the plants will grow both up and out, meshing together and making a full green canopy that blocks both the wind and visibility. For maintenance-free screen you'll eventually need almost as much lateral space as you expect in vertical height. Weeping Privet rows in near full sun

can grow to twelve feet. Another thing I like about this plant both as a visual and wind screen is its habit of merging into what ultimately appears as one long integrated row of foliage. While ligustrum sinense can be pruned, where there is room it just as often is allowed to grow free style with minimal maintenance. This allows it to take on the visual "weeping" characteristic that its name suggests.

"A dense line of specifically selected plant materialmay significantly diminish (your) heat loss."

A less-space-consuming but not quite as effective option may be Virginia Pine. Do not be seduced by the slightly faster growing loblolly. While it starts out with great promise, the Loblolly soon reaches heights that are far above eye level and eventually roof level with lit-

brittle and prone to breakage.



American Arborvitae

A third, though possibly more expensive near-full-sun option for ten to twenty year functionality and with greater line-of-sight density than pines is Arborvitae, *Cryptomeria Japonica* or Wax Myrtle. Kenneth Mabry at Dan West says he'd like to add Leyland Cyprus to that list but hesitates because of its susceptibility to stress-induced canker. I agree. Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), especially the "Emerald", "Nigra" or other cultivars that resist winter discoloration are effective screens but may require more maintenance.



Weeping privet is largely maintenance free

Stay away from pear trees unless you're an orchardist. While colorful with spring-time's white blossoms, bacterial Fire Blight disease and mechanical/structural failure are common and serious risks with many of these.

