
About Trees: Providing a barrier to cold winter winds

By Staff Reports

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Strategically located trees of the right kind can give some relief from the cold winter winds that whistle over our eaves.

Because wind chill has a cooling effect on more than just our ears and fingers, it can also increase the cost of staying warm indoors.

A dense line of plant material on the windward side of your residence may provide a visual/privacy barrier year-round and significantly diminish the heat loss from winter winds.

If you have good sunlight on the west to north sides and the horizontal and vertical room, a row of Chinese weeping privet (*Ligustrum sinense pendula*) is a fine answer for a privacy and wind screen. It may take three years or so to gain an effective height of 6-plus feet and characteristic density, but the plants will grow both up and out, meshing and making a full green canopy.

Weeping privet grows in near full sun can grow to 12 feet.

A less-space-consuming but not quite as effective option may be Virginia and/or white pines. 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 few green needles left lower down to block the winds.

Mature large loblollies are likely more of a winter hazard than a benefit, because the wood is so brittle and prone to breakage.

A third and possibly more expensive near-full-sun option for 10 to 20 years and with greater density is arborvitae or Leyland cypress. Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), especially the "Emerald," or other cultivars that resist winter discoloration, are effective screens but may require more maintenance.

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