

*Thuja occidentalis*  
'Sunny Smaragd'

# Golden Plants TO ADD Sparkle TO WINTER GARDENS

Golden plants provide your customers with the perfect sparkle to brighten their mood throughout the chilly months.

By Maria Zampini

**W**hy settle for stark, barren winter landscapes when designing a gorgeous, vibrant, sparkly view is so easy? Creating a winterscape filled with color and golden cheer is a sure way to cure winter humdrums. Who doesn't appreciate pretty pops of color among sprinkles of snow or vibrant, golden-green hues nestled in fallen leaves? Here are some striking options your customers can use to create enticing views during gloomy, gray months.

## Great Golden, Evergreen Groundcovers ... and More!

For an easy, colorful burst of winter brightness, EverColor carex tops the list of perfect plants for year-round lovely landscapes. Cold hardy to USDA Zone 5b, these easy-to-grow sedges add the perfect spark of color as a groundcover, added to a living wall, mixed into perennial

and annual borders, or combined with flowering plants in containers. All varieties grow well in sun, semi-shade or shade conditions, reaching 20 inches tall and wide.

'Everglow' lives up to its name: the distinctive green foliage with orange margins glows beautifully in the garden, with spring's hint of orange maturing into a fiery sunset blaze in fall — lasting all winter and into spring.

'Everillo' sports lime-green leaves that become golden yellow when mature, just in time to add brightness to the winter garden. The low-maintenance carex forms neat, controlled mounds. Best of all, it continues to shine even when planted in full shade.

For an improvement on the popular 'Evergold', 'Everoro' boasts deeper color with its distinctive rich golden striped foliage. This deer-resistant beauty works well in borders and balcony containers.



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## The Golden Glow of Shrubs

Don't let the name fool you. *Euonymus fortunei* 'Summer Runner' looks lovely in warm weather, but wait until you see it glowing in the winter! The gorgeous variegated foliage and spreading habit creates great hedges, but it also makes a fabulous focal point in the garden or planted in a container on a balcony. 'Summer Runner' even works well as a low-maintenance ground cover. Reaching only 12 inches tall and spreading 20 inches wide, it's the ideal tough shrub for sun or semi-shade, performing well in USDA Zone 4a.

When snow blankets the garden and gray skies make moods gloomy, we all need a bit of 'Happiness' — especially of the *Euonymus japonicus* variety. Bright golden foliage provides light and looks beautiful in borders or in a balcony container. The compact, 24-inch-tall shrub performs well in sun or semi-shade. Cold hardy to USDA Zone 6b, it's also disease resistant, making this golden beauty a winter must-have.

If the landscape needs to turn up the volume during bleak wintery days, add *Ilex aquifolium* 'Golden DJ' to planting plans. The refined, dark green foliage with yellow, serrated edges looks lovely in mass plantings and borders, works well as a vibrant hedge, but also makes a gorgeous golden statement when filling a container alone or in a combination planting. 'Golden DJ' reaches 47 inches high and 20 inches wide. Winter hardy to USDA Zone 6a is easily adaptable, thriving in sun, part-shade or full shade.

Rather than add another standard green conifer to the garden, choose the eye-catching *Juniperus* 'Lemon Pfizz'. More compact — but also more vibrant than comparable varieties — the lovely lemon color remains true all year. The densely branched, low-spreading habit makes it excellent for mass plantings. It doesn't burn in full sun and performs well in semi-shade and both hot and cold temperatures, hardy to USDA Zone 5b. 'Lemon Pfizz' also resists tip blight and offers good drought resistance once established.

Another conifer offering a golden glow for the winter garden is *Thuja plicata* 'Golden Spire'. This spectacular yellow conifer doesn't suffer from sunburn and is hardy to USDA Zone 6a.

For the perfect bright pyramid, *Thuja occidentalis* 'Sunny Smaragd' stands out from the conifer crowd. The gorgeous bright yellow color and upright habit grows faster than 'Golden Smaragd' and boasts a warmer, richer yellow hue. It's easy to grow in sun or semi-shade, doesn't suffer from sunburn, and can stand alone as a pretty specimen in containers. Hardy to USDA Zone 4a.



*Ilex aquifolium*  
'Golden DJ'

## Golden Charm for Winter Gardens

Whether a great burst of brightness or movement in the garden is the goal, here are some perennial possibilities with a golden glow to appear through all or part of the "off-season."

*Hakonechloa macra* 'Sunflare' is a new introduction of the extremely popular Japanese forest grass. Its vibrant chartreuse leaves become intense golden yellow when exposed to full sun, accented with deep crimson, randomly appearing highlights. Older, mature plants display more crimson foliage. The plant shows off its fall colors with a combination of chartreuse and gold and saturated with tones of burnt orange and burgundy red. The neat, compact mounding habit with graceful cascading foliage looks lovely swaying in the breeze. The plant eventually reaches 12-18 inches tall and 18-24 inches wide and is hardy to USDA Zone 5a. It can be used in woodland gardens, water features, slopes, perennial borders, mixed containers, mass plantings or alone as a container specimen.

Fern lovers, rejoice! You're no longer limited to green in the garden! *Dryopteris wallichiana* 'Jurassic Gold' creates a gorgeous golden spark in the garden. Selected as the People's Choice winner at the 2020 Farwest New Varieties Showcase and the 2019 winner of the Horticulture Week Business Award, 'Jurassic Gold' creates the perfect "wow" factor in landscapes. Young golden-orange spring shoots fade to bright golden-yellow and green as they mature. The landscape

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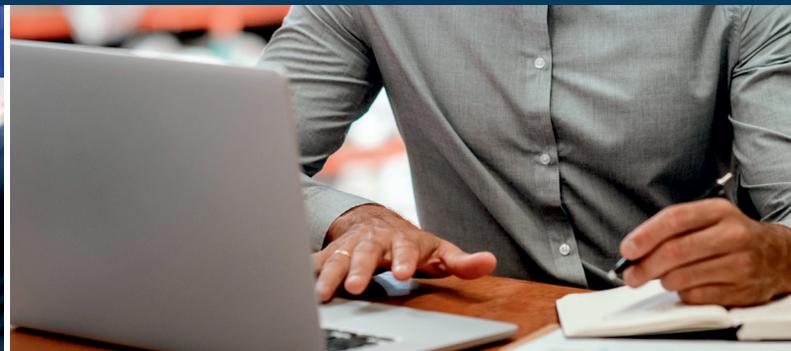
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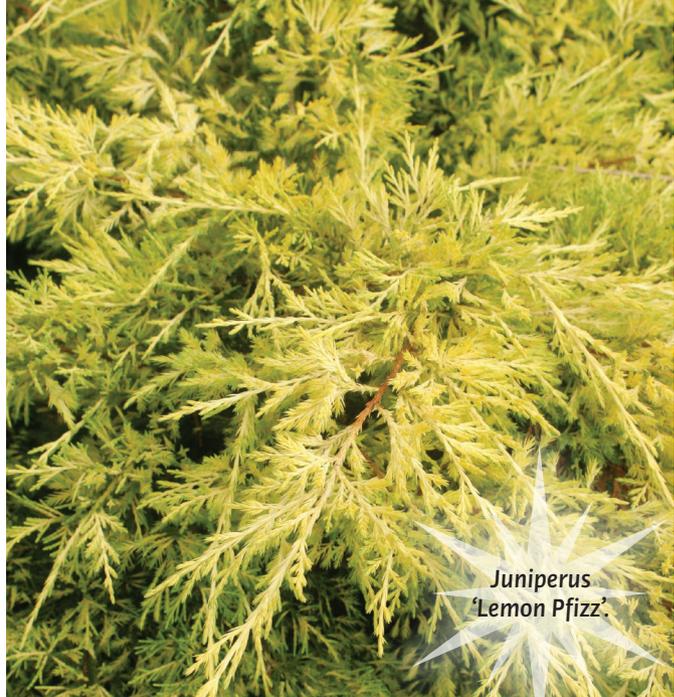


benefits from the bright golden color, livening up bland backdrops but fronds will likely collapse in mid to late winter. Perfect for beds, borders, or containers, 'Jurassic Gold' grows 24 inches tall and 18 inches wide, is hardy to USDA Zones 5-9.

For creating both interesting texture and movement in the winter garden, add *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Alligator' to landscape plans. Not only does 'Alligator' display unique leaf markings that create foliage interest, the low-maintenance plant flowers in September, with the silvery plumes providing gorgeous color and movement throughout winter. Hardy to USDA Zone 6a, 'Alligator' grows in sun or partial shade and can be used in mass plantings, containers or to create a wind or privacy screen.

*Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Lumen Gold' provides golden spring foliage that turns lime green in summer, but in colder climates and placed in full sun, the foliage becomes more yellow than green. In summer, brown flowers add interest, lasting throughout winter. 'Lumen Gold' performs in sun to semi-shade. Use it as a solitary specimen, in borders or mass plantings, or in container designs. The compact plant grows 10 inches tall and 12 inches wide. It is hardy to USDA Zone 5a.

While golden plants dress up the winter landscape, remember that winter offers the perfect opportunity to assess the bones of the garden, too. We need to remind gardeners to evaluate the structures that give the garden definition and interest, even when there's not a bloom in sight. Good garden bones provide the foundation for creating a welcoming, interesting landscape that



Juniperus  
'Lemon Pfizz'

thrives throughout the four seasons — and golden plants provide the perfect sparkle to brighten gardeners' moods throughout the chilly months. 🌱

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