

PLANT HEALTH CARE REPORT



Yew

Yews (*Taxus*) are among the most popular evergreens for foundations, hedges, and group plantings. They are prized for their compact growth habit, deep green foliage, and wide diversity of growth forms. Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), English yew (*Taxus baccata*), and a hybrid between these species, *Taxus* × *media*, are the most widely planted yew species. More than 100 cultivated varieties of these species are commercially grown.

Yews are relatively easy to grow but have specific cultural requirements. They require well-drained, fertile soil with neutral pH. While yews perform well in both sun and shade, they should be planted in areas sheltered from high winds. They grow best in temperate regions, struggling in areas of extreme cold or heat. Unlike other narrow leaf evergreens, yews tolerate heavy pruning and shearing even into dense, formal shapes. A more natural appearance is obtained if the plants are pruned, rather than sheared, in early spring and again in summer to maintain the desired form.



*Taxus
baccata
'Stricta'*



Yews are intolerant of bark injuries on branches and twigs. Snow and ice accumulation in winter can cause bark wounds and lead to branch and twig dieback. Usually, this dieback becomes evident in spring or summer following the injury.

The most common cause of decline and death for this genus is excessive soil moisture. This condition usually occurs in heavy, clay soils, low areas where drainage is impeded, or in areas of excessive irrigation or runoff. On wet sites, roots are prone to Phytophthora root rot.

Principal insect pests include mealybugs, scales, and weevils. Scales and mealybugs feed on twigs by inserting their sucking mouthpart into plant cells and removing the contents. Heavy infestations can significantly reduce plant vitality and growth. Weevils feed on roots in the larval stage and on the foliage as adults. Foliage injury is evident as semi-circular notches in leaves. Yews are a preferred food source by white-tailed deer. In areas with even light-to-moderate deer populations, browse injury can severely disfigure plants.

Monitoring and Treatment Considerations for Yew

Mid-winter

Inspect plants for deer browse; apply repellent treatment as needed.

Late winter

Apply dormant treatment to suppress overwintering insects. Reduce or remove branches to correct structure. Sample soil for nutrient and pH levels. If decline is evident, submit root samples for Phytophthora root rot testing.

Early spring

Apply soil treatment to suppress Phytophthora root rot as needed. Expose and inspect root collar for problems. Add mulch as necessary. Adjust irrigation, divert runoff, or improve soil drainage as necessary to reduce soil moisture levels.

Mid to late spring

Monitor for mealybugs, scale crawlers, and weevils; treat as needed. Fertilize, adjust pH, and amend soil according to soil analysis. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize water stress and prevent root disease.

Early summer

Monitor for scale crawlers and weevils; treat as needed.

Midsummer

Repeat soil treatment to suppress Phytophthora root rot as needed. Monitor for scale crawlers and weevils; treat as needed.

Late summer through early fall

Monitor for weevils; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize water stress and prevent root disease.

Mid to late fall

Inspect plants for deer browse; apply repellent treatment as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize winter injury. Where plants are subject to ice and snow loads (e.g., near building overhangs), tie up crowns to minimize breakage.
