

Groundcover/ Small Shrub
Evergreen
Native
Map #43

Creeping Juniper
(*Juniperus horizontalis*)
Family: *Cupressaceae*



Winter foliage



Phomopsis blight
(fungal disease)

Leaves: soft and pale green, bluish green or steel blue. Turns plum-purple in winter on most cultivars.

Stems: foliage grows in tufts that create a plume-like shape to the branches.

Bark: insignificant.

Flowers: insignificant. On separate male and female plants.

Fruits: bluish on small stalks that curve backward. Seldom seen on cultivated plants.

Habit: Mat-forming groundcover that ranges in height from 4" to 2' depending on the cultivar. They should all be planted in anticipation of a 6-8' spread and will grow considerably larger if allowed.

Culture: Adaptable. Tolerates very hot, poor, dry soils. Full sun. Although low growing junipers will maintain a consistent height they will continue to spread throughout their life, requiring periodic maintenance to contain them within a desired area. In the humid Midwest it is very susceptible to juniper blight (*Phomopsis*), a fungus that begins at the tips and can spread killing entire branches or plants. Despite widespread use, the presence of superior low-growing junipers leaves little place in today's landscape for this species outside of the most dry, sterile sites.

Cultivars: Blue rug ('Wiltonii') - a low growing selection with silver-blue foliage and attractive fruits. Retains its summer color well in winter, developing only a light purple tinge. Is the cultivar of *J. horizontalis* least damaged by juniper blight, as the fungi are mainly confined to the tips of branches. 'Blue Chip' - Bluish summer foliage takes on purple-plum overtones in winter. 'Plumosa' or 'Andorra' - Gray-green summer foliage turns plum-purple in winter. Habit of upright plumes.



'Blue Chip'



Blue Rug ('Wiltonii')



'Plumosa' ('Andorra')

Credits: Photos from: www.midwestlandscapeplants.org and various other .edu websites unless noted. Text from: "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants" by Michael Dirr; "Tree Identification Characteristics (abridged)" from the University of Illinois Extension; www.midwestlandscapeplants.org; and misc. other sources. This publication may not be sold except to cover the cost of reproduction when used as part of an educational program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.