



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

Mix it up a little...

Well it is that time of year again, I have been racking up the miles checking out nurseries and plant material for both the fall harvest as well as the spring 2014 season. Fresh evergreens are now rolling into CPC and it is a great time of year to get those fall plantings done. Availability is good and the plants have enjoyed a great spring and summer growing season due to the generally cooler temperatures and good rainfall.



One of the questions that has been asked of me a lot this year is "should I continue to plant Colorado Spruce, they seem to be dying off everywhere?" or this statement, "I am totally done planting Colorado Spruce. I am only going to plant Blackhills Spruce and Concolor Fir, what do you think?" Truthfully, I think that this an overreaction because planting a monoculture of anything leaves your landscape open to problems.

What has been infecting large stands of Colorado Spruce in southern Michigan is a combination of two types of needle cast, *Rhizosphaera* with a secondary infection of *Stigmina*. Growers have been aggressively combating this problem in the field through several methods.

They have removed stock in their field that had the possibility of being infected. They are planting blocks of trees 8 wide, instead of 16 wide, so they can get better coverage when spraying, and they have put trees on bigger spacing to again ensure adequate coverage when spraying and good air circulation around the trees.

They are doing their part, now it is time for us to do ours. First of all, be prepared to maintain your planting of evergreens with a good spray program, this just makes sense. You fertilize your lawn, take your kids in for flu shots, why not take care of your spruce in the same way? Second of all, mix it up at little, a good combination of spruce, pine, fir, and maybe even some arborvitae makes for a very attractive screen.

So this guy's advice - go ahead and plant Colorado Spruce - along with some other species to make that perfect border and build in an aggressive maintenance program to keep that border attractive for a long time to come.



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