

Evergreen Needle Drop

Natural Seasonal Needle Drop

Symptoms & Damage

- Inner, older needles turn yellow or brown and fall off, usually in late summer through fall.
- Affected needles are typically closer to the trunk, not the newest growth at branch tips.
- In some years, needle loss can be heavier, alarming homeowners but rarely fatal to trees.

Cause

- A natural, seasonal process where evergreens shed older needles after several years of growth.
- Not caused by insects or disease but can be confused with problems like spider mites, needle cast, or drought stress.

Prevention & Cultural Controls

- Ensure proper watering during dry periods to minimize stress.
- Mulch around trees to conserve soil moisture.
- Avoid unnecessary fertilization that can stress trees or cause excessive new growth.
- Plant evergreens in appropriate locations with good drainage and sunlight.

Treatment Options

- No treatment is necessary—this is a normal part of evergreen growth.
- Monitor for other issues (insect pests, fungal disease, or drought) to rule out additional stressors.

Best Time to Observe

- Late summer through fall, though timing varies by species and weather conditions.

Plant(s) Affected

- Pine, spruce, fir, arborvitae, cedar, and other needled evergreens.

Additional Notes

- Evergreen needle drop is often mistaken for disease or insect damage.
- New needles continue to grow each year, keeping the tree full and healthy overall.

