

Painting Heavy Snow on Evergreens

Here's a mini lesson on painting heavy snow on evergreens that applies to painting greeting cards or a full sized winter landscape watercolor painting.

Step 1: Sketch or draw the outline of an evergreen tree. (If you want to skip this step and draw the shape with your brush as you paint that's ok too.)

Paint the shape of an evergreen on dry paper using a diluted mix of pale blue/blue gray/ or a clean gray shade. What you will be painting is the beginning stages of the shadows and contours of the snow on the evergreen tree. It's ok to leave some isolated white shapes if they "happen" as you go.

Let it dry. If this is for a greeting card start another one while you wait!

Step 2: When it's dry, add a little more blue paint to your mix and paint the sky around the top portion of the evergreen tree shape. Your brush should be fairly juicy and the paint should spread quickly and evenly. This is called a flat wash. You may want to paint around the top edge of a mountain too.



Now....time to let it dry again.***

An Option:

*** As it starts to dry and the paper starts to lose its shine you may want to sprinkle a pinch of table salt in the sky to create snowflakes. When using salt the timing is important if the paper gets too dry nothing will happen. If it is too wet, the salt will not have the right reaction to make individual snowflakes. (You may want to experiment before trying this on your card.) Be careful not to use too much salt. Unless you want to create a blizzard!

After sprinkling the salt -- continue to let it dry. As it dries you should see moisture drawn up under the salt crystals, although the rest of the sky looks fairly dry. Carefully and gently brush the salt off with a dry paper towel. The moisture collected under the salt crystals may smear so be careful and watch what you are doing.



Step 3: While I was waiting for the sky to dry, I added a tree line at the base of my mountain. This is also painted with a pale wash so that it looks distant. Use your imagination when adding the background. Each one can be different and uniquely your own.

Step 4: In this step, we will be defining the clumps of snow sitting on the branches. Due to the weight of the snow the branches will tend to sag or hang down somewhat. Each tree limb varies in size and shape so they will be more natural looking if they appear irregular in both shape and position.

If you want to lightly sketch in the placement of these limbs using a pencil, these illustrations will give you an idea of how to draw them. Don't forget to incorporate any of the white patches that "happened" as you painted step one. (I am using a Sharpie so you can see the marks. Please use a pencil on your paper so you can erase the lines later.)



(Hint: You will find this pattern repeated in other forms of nature such as pine cones too!)



Step 5: When you start painting these clumps of snow its important to blend off or soften some of the edges. To blend or soften an edge place a stroke of clear water next to a painted stroke. The color will bleed into the damp area. If you just make a larger puddle, you are using too much water in your initial painted stroke...adjust by blotting your brush to eliminate some of the water. I like to use pale shades of blue or cool grays for snow shadows. One of my favorites is a light gray-purple color.

Once you have added some of the contour and shadows to the clumps of snow you may decide that you like to heavy snow look and leave it as it is. (See the example in image of step 4 & 5 below) Let the painting dry before moving to step 6.



The pattern you are aiming for is staggered much like laying bricks. Look at the red lines I drew over this tree. Can you see how the lower limbs are alternating between the limbs growing above them?

Step 6:

Now you can add the branches and green needles under the snow clumps. The more green you add the lighter the snow fall will look. There is a wide range of possibilities and looks that can be created depending on how much or how little of the greenery you include.

Step 7:

This is an optional step. The example (R) shows more greenery less white snow. Now add other interesting details to complete the setting. Ta Dah!

Below are examples of more evergreens in heavy snow with other landscape elements added.

Happy Painting!



I hope you have enjoyed my tips for painting snow on evergreens. If you want to print and use any of my watercolor tips for personal educational non-profit purposes please read and follow my [Terms and Conditions](#) for use.

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