

Forever Green

By Cindy Hale

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If you've competed much, you've surely seen the evergreen horse. At the start of each show season the same horse is trotted out at the same circuit of shows and pretty much produces the same sort of mediocre results. Year after year he never progresses beyond the baby hunter classes or the training level dressage tests. Why is the horse stuck in low gear?

Occasionally the evergreen status can be credited to a determined rider who has made it his or her life's goal to refine the talents of a difficult horse. The rider simply won't give up. And then there are the perfectionists who refuse to move their horses up the ranks until they're absolutely perfect. But there may be an even greater reason why some young green horses eventually become mature green horses.

"I think the biggest reason a horse doesn't progress is because his trainer or rider lacks the knowledge, experience and resources to properly bring him along," trainer Lucy Stewart explains. "It takes a special ability to bring along a young horse. In the case of a so-called evergreen horse, in my opinion the problem usually has to do with who's in the saddle."

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