

conifer

AMERICAN CONIFER SOCIETY | CONIFERQUARTERLY | Volume 38, Number 1/WINTER 2021



Winter 2021 Volume 38, Number 1

CONIFERQUARTERLY (ISSN 8755-0490) is published quarterly by the American Conifer Society. The Society is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is tax exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

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CONIFER QUARTERLY

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Cedrus libani subsp. *stenocoma*,
The Harper Collection of Rare and Dwarf Conifers,
Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, MI.
Photo by Jack Wikle.

Inside Cover Photo

Abies concolor 'Wintergold',
Rossford, OH.
Photo by John Vrablic.

Back Cover Photo

Platycladus orientalis 'Morgan' in winter color,
Adrian, MI.
Photo by Ron Elardo.

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President's Message - Winter 2021

David Olszyk

In a world that appears to be turning itself upside down and inside out on a daily basis, I hope everyone has access to a conifer garden, in which to unpack and recoup.

Finally, after nearly a year, cracks are beginning to appear in the veneer of endless isolation, quarantines, and general malaise. Welcome to 2021, hopefully the year of vaccines and resumption of social revelry. Later this year, the ACS's Regions have committed to holding small local events. Please support them if you're comfortable doing so. Unfortunately, we will not be conducting a National Conference for the second consecutive year. The timing of everything couldn't be guaranteed in time to sign contracts and make down payments. Hang in there, folks. The 2022 Conference in Philadelphia is in the planning stages, under the Northeastern Region's lead. Hopefully, the Central Region can revisit the Clinton, IA venue for 2025.

In the near and intermediate future, the ACS will have to decide what safety measures we'll need to employ to keep ourselves safe. It wouldn't surprise me if the Board recommends that a potential event attendee show a vaccination record to gain admission. That's only speculation at this point, but it's something that I'd be likely to favor.

Cedars. I hope you enjoy this issue's article. In my opinion, as a vernacular, "cedar" has a lot of strangeness surrounding it. Cedar, or Κέδρος, is the Greek name for resinous trees. It appears to be a common name, given by plant pioneers everywhere, to any tree with aromatic wood. We find cedars within at least two families (Cupressaceae and Pinaceae) and several genera (*Cupressus*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Thuja*). If there's a single botanical term that comes with more built-in ambiguity, I'm not interested in seeing it. Stuff like this is the reason that botanical Latin is so cool and so useful.

Cultivars. As many of you know, my longstanding role within the ACS has been that of Conifer Database Editor. I'll be working on this project long after my time as president has lapsed. Thank you to everyone

who has submitted pictures and commentary for the plants already listed in the database. Many have asked what criteria we use to include new plants. The answer is really quite simple. In order to be included in the ACS Conifer Database, a plant has to be established, propagated by many nurseries, and growing in large arboreta.

I, with the approval of the Board of Directors, decided long ago that a newly introduced conifer needs several years of evaluation before being documented and included in the Conifer Database. Pictures and descriptions of second- or third-year grafted plants are of little use in convincing a reader whether or not a plant is garden-worthy over the long term.

I remember the "good old days" when the growers assumed the responsibility of evaluating new cultivars over a few generations, in order to confirm that mature plants would perform as intended. Quite often, dwarf or colorful mutations will "revert" and become large trees, or lose their variegation and result in mature plants that are indistinguishable from the parent species. Now, with competition from big box stores squeezing profit margins, many growers rush new plants to market because they know that something with a new name will bring a premium price. That practice puts the burden of evaluation on the customer.

However, if you are growing a conifer that's mature (10 years old or more), and awesome, but not included in our database, let me know immediately. We'll get it written up and documented, forever.

I congratulate you all for your perseverance and support. Better times are just ahead. I hope to see you all in person, soon.

From a Memorial Tree and Garden Conifer To an Endangered Species

Uncovering a Little Known History of *Picea omorika* and its Cultivars

Text and Photography Adrian Bloom



Foggy Bottom Garden at Bressingham.

How I came to write this article.

Conifers and their role as garden plants have been a lifelong passion of mine, resulting in the development of my more than 50-year-old, six-acre Foggy Bottom Garden at Bressingham, United Kingdom, along with books and articles on conifers.

Back in 1965, on the recommendation of Fred Barcock, a local nursery plantsman, I obtained the first Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika* sp.) to plant in my garden. It had a pyramidal form, dark-green foliage, and needles attractively silver beneath. Fred suggested that this relatively new species of spruce was ideal for the eastern side of Britain, as it can put up with drier conditions than most. It apparently originated in the mountains of Eastern Europe, behind the Iron Curtain, which divided Germany into two countries after World War II.

One specimen was planted among other conifers to make a shelterbelt of varying shapes and colors. It is now more than 50 feet tall—so large that I couldn't get it in one photograph. Looking at the images, one can see the narrow, spire-like tops above the other trees. Strangely, those plants sent out layers at their bases, so that they now have one original trunk and four layers, each reaching for the sky, much as they do in their original habitat.

I obtained another attractive form, *Picea omorika* 'Nana' (dwarf Serbian spruce), which is ideal for the smaller garden. It is an attractive, silver-leaved plant that appeared around 1930 as a sport on a Serbian spruce at the Goudkade Nursery in The Netherlands. It eventually reached tree-like proportions. My specimen in Foggy Bottom is now around 30 feet tall. Later, I also managed to track down plants of some rarity, then and now,



Another vista of Foggy Bottom Garden.

of *Picea omorika* f. *pendula* (pendulous form of Serbian spruce). This name seems to have covered several similar forms, very narrow, with short pendulous branches, the arching tips revealing the silvery undersides of the needles. The two slightly different plants in Foggy Bottom are, unfortunately, rather hidden, but their tall, narrow spires reach into the sky and are noticeable from afar, particularly in winter.

A tragic accident, a fitting tribute.

My brother Rob (short for Robert, to those who knew him well) had, as I, spent more than 30 years developing our family business, Blooms Nurseries, and later our larger company, Blooms of Bressingham. In August 1962, we both returned from working away to come back to our Bressingham nursery, at the request of our father Alan Bloom, perennial plantsman and founder of the company.

As joint managing directors, Rob initially managed the estate (farm), later introducing training and computer technology, while I was more involved with the nursery, production, and marketing. As the full-time staff grew

to around 200 people, we increased production to nearly four million plants for mail order and wholesale sales to garden centers.

On a late summer's evening in September 1995, Rob, my elder brother by 15 months, was driving home from Norwich, our nearest major city. A drunk driver crashed his car into Rob's. Both drivers were instantly killed. It was a tremendous shock to Rob's family and to all those close to him, and, of course, a great loss to our business. The accident also demonstrated, not for the last time, how large a role luck can play in our lives. To mark the 25th anniversary of his untimely death, I planned to write about Rob and the tree that we had planted at Bressingham in his memory, *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Bruns' (Bruns weeping Serbian spruce).

A Special Plant for Remembrance.

Rob was a man for not only joining organizations, but also for leading them, and so it was with Diss Round Table. In his year as chairman, he instigated a twinning with the small spa town of Bad Zwischenahn near Bremen in North Germany. There were

Picea omorika 'Pendula Bruns'
memorial tree planted for Robert Bloom.



exchanges of visits to Diss by the Bad Zwischenahn Round Table, and one planned in return for 1996. Rob would have been 57 on March 19th, 1996, but, instead, a small group of the Bloom family, a few of the nursery's staff, colleagues, and representatives of Diss Round Table planted a six-foot specimen conifer, *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Bruns' in the Bressingham Gardens in his memory.

A Special Conifer, *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Bruns'

Picea omorika 'Pendula Bruns' has the common name of Bruns weeping Serbian spruce. It's a striking selection, which was found growing as a seedling in the Heinrich Bruns Nursery in Rostrup, Germany. Undoubtedly, and for various reasons, this was an ideal conifer to plant in Rob's memory. A sign was engraved to go beside it, explaining to garden visitors the significance of a conifer planted among the perennials in the Dell Garden at Bressingham. Though I had long

been interested in this plant and had an idea about its name and origin, it wasn't until I started researching for this article that I began to uncover the fascinating history of Serbian spruces and how this selection of the species occurred. Tongue in cheek, not many people know this.

Starting from the beginning.

All plants that we observe and grow in our gardens, which can fit almost any description, fill various roles,



Picea omorika in the wild in the lake areas of Northern Italy. and have a name, botanical or descriptive—all had to start somewhere, whether discovered, selected, or bred by someone. Perhaps, the more substantial or long-lived the plant, the more interest there might be in its name, origins, and history. Seldom, of course, is there sufficient space in catalogs, magazines, or even books to devote to an in-depth story that brings to light the full history of a plant.

Picea omorika 'Pendula Bruns' was not only an appropriate tree for remembering my brother. It stands alone as an interesting and versatile conifer. So, here

is the low-down on a plant that we have grown in the Gardens at Bressingham for 25 years.

The origins of *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Bruns' take us back to the origin of the species itself (thank Charles Darwin for that appropriate phrase). *Picea omorika* (Serbian spruce) is a native of the Balkan Peninsula. Perhaps like the Caucasus, the Balkans are, for many of us, places we haven't yet visited. On the south side, the Balkan Peninsula begins with Greece. To the north lie Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania; to the west, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, and Slovenia.

The Origins of the Serbian spruce, its discovery and distribution.

Although located in the heart of Eastern Europe, *Picea omorika* was first discovered near the small village of Zaovine on Tara Mountain, Western Serbia, by Professor Josif Pancic, in 1877. He had been aware of the species, but had not visited this exact location. He was a Serbian doctor, botanist, and the first president of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Some of the first seeds collected from this

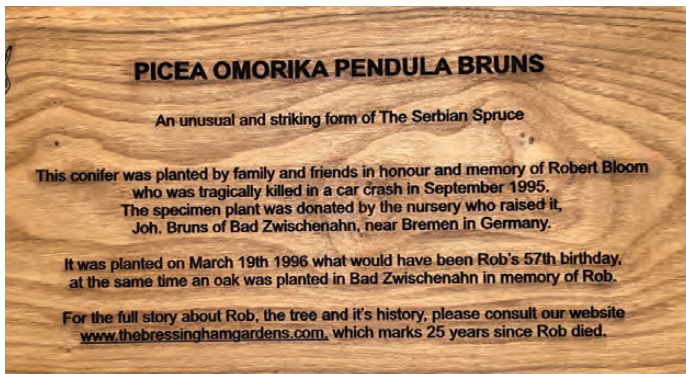
inhospitable area were sent to the Froebel Nursery in Zürich, Switzerland, in 1881. Pancic introduced the initial plants of Serbian spruce, and, within a few years, it had become a *new*, sought-after conifer, recognized for its attractive habit and foliage. *Picea omorika* was also adaptable to most soils and climates in Europe for garden, landscape, and forestry use. The Royal Botanic Garden at Kew received seeds from Belgrade (then Yugoslavia, now Serbia) in 1889. Nearly a hundred years later in 1980, a specimen grown from that seed is the tallest tree in Kew, measuring 67 feet, and lives on the drier side of Britain. A young specimen planted at Murthly Castle in Perthshire, Scotland, in 1897, reached 100 feet by 1988, which demonstrates how well *Picea omorika* can respond to a moister climate and, perhaps, more suitable soil conditions.

Hidden in the Balkans.

One reason that *Picea omorika* hadn't been identified earlier was that its distribution was limited to a relatively small, remote, and sparsely populated area. Its natural range is restricted to the upper (984 feet to one mile high) slopes of the Tara and Javor mountains

Multiple *Picea omorika* tops rising above other conifers. Down below the multiple tops, one trunk of *Picea omorika* gave rise to four. The lower branches of the trees died off.





The memorial plaque at Robert Bloom's 'Pendula Bruns'.

of Western Serbia, following the upper valley of the River Drina. Interestingly, *Picea omorika* had been widespread across Europe before the Ice Age, but is now only found growing in this very limited area close to and among the more common *Picea abies* (Norway spruce), which has taken over the role as the most widespread spruce in Europe.

Incidentally, the small village of Zaovine, which Professor Pancic had visited, is now in the Tara National Park in the Tara Mountains, Serbia, close to a picturesque lake. The website guide to the National Park adds: "The Serbian spruce is known among natural scientists throughout the world because it grows only in the middle course of the Drina in Serbia and Bosnia. It is one of the oldest species of European flora. It originates from the Tertiary Period, the time in the Earth's history that came after the extinction of the dinosaurs and that lasted until the Ice Age." The Ice Age destroyed much of the flora of Europe. "However, the Serbian spruce found refuge in the canyon of the Drina, where it hid until 1875!" Perhaps the most authoritative research was done for the 8th edition of William Jackson Bean's encyclopedic *Trees and Shrubs*. It is Bean's description that has been used as the basis for the information found on the important new resource set up by the International Dendrology Society, Trees and Shrubs Online (treesandshrubsonline.org).

***Picea omorika* classified as an endangered species.**

The Monumental Trees website suggests that, because of the steep slopes and ravines, the area where the narrowest trees grow "is inaccessible". This comment was dramatically highlighted to me by Tom Christian, who is a botanist with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Scotland. He kindly let me use some of the

photographs he took while doing research in the Tara Mountains in 2010. He is also the Assistant Editor of Trees and Shrubs Online (TSO). In his email to me he explained:

Perhaps one other reason the species was not discovered until relatively late, besides the remote area, is the extreme difficulty that exists in accessing the remaining stands, even when you are in the area. When I was doing fieldwork there in 2010, we faced, every morning, long strenuous climbs up extremely steep hills, until we came to the spruces, and, even then, they could not be climbed by conventional means. We had to climb adjacent species, e.g., Pinus nigra (Austrian black pine), and then lasso a Serbian spruce! The other method was to access the crowns via cliffs. The purpose of the fieldwork was to make a new IUCN (International Union for Conservation of



Brent Markus standing to the right of *Picea omorika* 'Nana'. Photo by Sam Pratt at Cambium Connection (David Helms's former nursery in Mt. Vernon, WA.) David estimated the tree, at the time, to be 40 years old.



Picea omorika 'Nana' specimen at Conifer Kingdom, Silverton, OR. Photo by Sam Pratt.

Nature) assessment based on detailed population data. The results and our observations are published under "Threatened Conifers, *Picea omorika*".

Serbian spruce is now an Endangered Species. The whole issue of endangered conifers can be found online. This vital subject is one, of which I was largely unaware. It could lead us also to treasure the plants we have and grow, even knowing they are in cultivation.

The Bruns legacy is not as straightforward as you might think.

That story will appear in the Spring CQ 2021.

Editor's Note: Adrian Bloom has written a wonderful book on the use of conifers in the garden. The title is: *Gardening with Conifers*, 2nd Edition, Firefly Publishing, 2017. I highly recommend it. A review of it has been published on the ACS Website by Sara Malone, Website Editor.

Robert Bloom (l), Alan Bloom, Jason Bloom, Adrian Bloom (far right). Photo by Elizabeth Handy.



A Conifer Treasure

Text Tom Cox and Photography Rona Simmons



Eleanor Frye in her garden.

As I began to contemplate writing this article, I struggled to find an appropriate title. In our parlance, the term “conifer treasure” is normally assumed to mean a valued plant, but, in this context, I am using it to refer to an even greater treasure, a 102-year-young, long-time member of the American Conifer Society. I believe I am correct in stating that she is the only member in the history of our Society to reach and surpass the century mark.

Approximately 14 years ago, Mrs. Eleanor Frye contacted me. She resides on Lookout Mountain, TN, not too far from our home in Canton, GA. She called to offer me her *Wollemia nobilis* (Wollemi pine), which she had acquired from National Geographic during its initial distribution of this rare conifer in 2006. At that time, a one-gallon tree was selling for over \$100 (\$129 today).



The front walk at the street side of Eleanor Frye's house.

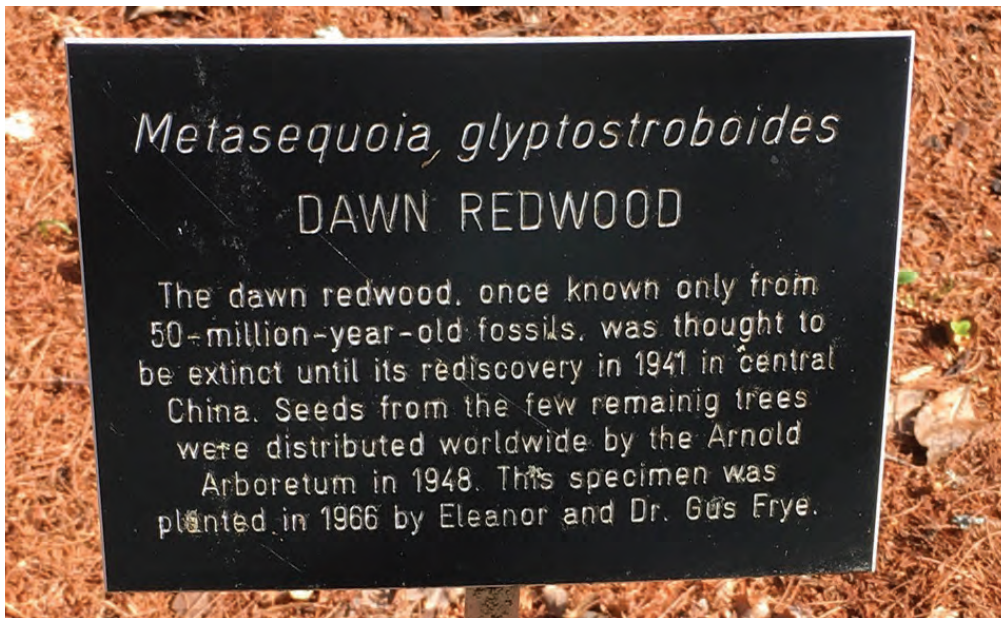
Mrs. Frye said that she was not getting any younger and feared that her successors would not properly care for it. Stands of Wollemi pines had only recently been discovered in a remote canyon near Sydney, Australia. I immediately said yes, and, soon thereafter, my wife, Evelyn, and I made the drive to her home.

After our arrival and after enjoying a southern hospitality lunch, Mrs. Frye showed us the Wollemi. It was at least six feet tall and in pristine condition. It had spent its winters indoors, protected from the cold. Mrs. Frye then invited us to tour her immaculately tended conifer garden, situated on a hillside with numerous serpentine paths. Her garden holds its own among any gardens of similar size that I have ever seen, anywhere. This is the garden of a connoisseur, filled with top-tier conifers. Upon my recommendation, her garden would later be featured as an ACS Southeastern Region Conference venue.

Over the years, Eleanor and I remained in touch, and Evelyn and I visited her periodically. In time, a true friendship developed. One day, friends of ours, Rona Simmons and Harry Bethea, were visiting us, and I mentioned Eleanor. At that time, she was almost 100 years old. Rona is an accomplished author and had started writing a book on World War II veterans who served in support roles during the war. I had learned from Eleanor that she enlisted in 1942 as a WAVE (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services) and, by virtue of her college degree from the University of Georgia in 1939, received a commission as a lieutenant in the US Navy. Her duties were to help assign ships out of Charleston, SC, and New Orleans, LA, to convoys for supply transport to Europe. I suggested to Rona that they meet. Not only did they meet,



Eleanor Frye standing beside the dawn redwood. Photo Eleanor's iPad.



The plaque commemorating the planting of the dawn redwood. Photo by Eleanor Frye.

but Eleanor became featured in Rona's book, *The Other Veterans of World War II: Stories from Behind the Front Lines*, published by Kent State University Press (2020).

I am happy to report that, at 102, Eleanor Frye is still going strong. Her recall of the plants in her garden is remarkable. One of her favorites is *Picea abies* 'Dandy Lion' (Dandy Lion Norway spruce), a gift from former ACS president Bob Fincham. This selection is an intraspecific cross between *Picea abies* 'Gold Drift' and *Picea abies* 'Acrocona'. Among my favorites in Eleanor's garden is an approximately 90-foot tall *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (dawn redwood) that she and her husband, Dr. Gus Frye, a prominent orthopedic surgeon, planted in 1966. As Eleanor tells it, "the dawn redwood was just a twig when we planted it." My other favorite is her perfect specimen of *Sciadopitys verticillata* 'Yellow Dream' (Yellow Dream Japanese umbrella pine), which is around 12 feet tall.

When Eleanor started gardening, her first efforts were in the field of hybridizing daylilies, an endeavor that she mentioned was a lot of work. In 2006, she discovered conifers, and there was no turning back. Attesting to her keen sense of humor, when I asked her the year she started her garden, she quipped, "Let me go downstairs and get my old checkbooks. You can't start a garden without a checkbook."

When you read some of the accomplishments of this remarkable person, you'll understand why I consider her a treasure. She is still collecting conifers.



Canadian hemlocks arch over the walkway in the garden.



Yellow Dream Japanese umbrella pine.

In fact, nothing excites her more than to receive a new conifer. If you want to reach out to her, you can contact her at conifer.frye@gmail.com.

For those wishing to send her a card, her address is 3 West Bartram Rd., Lookout Mtn., TN 37350-1501.

I have always had a reverence for old gardens and for the stories behind those who started them. It is even more meaningful if I get to meet the original owner. In connection with an ACS Southeastern Region Annual Conference, Evelyn and I visited the historic garden of Pamela Harper in the Tidewater area of Virginia. I remember a feeling of history as we walked with her through her plantings. It seemed that each plant had a story. I have had that same sense of reverence whenever I visited Eleanor Frye, a most special person, who started a most special garden. It has been an honor to share her story with you.

This article originally appeared in the *Southeastern Conifer Quarterly*, March 2020, pp. 9 - 11. Your CQ Editor changed parts of it and updated it for this issue.

**MENDOCINO COAST
BOTANICAL GARDENS**

AN AMERICAN CONIFER SOCIETY REFERENCE GARDEN

A STUNNING COLLECTION WITH NEARLY 200 VARIETIES OF CONIFER INCLUDING EXOTICS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

GARDENBYTHESEA.ORG

Jim Boyko, July 17, 1942 – November 23, 2020

Text and Photography Bob Fincham



Pinus mugo 'Butternut' in the foreground. *Pinus mugo* 'Buttercup' in the background with Jim in between them.

The conifer world lost another member of the older generation. He was an innovator, a nurseryman, and a plantsman with an unassuming nature and a warm personality. I lost a friend.

Most of the people who have a real interest in conifers know the name of Jim Boyko. He died just a few days before Thanksgiving from a massive stroke at the age of 78.

Jim's nursery was a mecca for people looking for odd, unique, or rare conifers. It was almost the Dr. Seuss center of the plant world. Jim was a visionary when it came to turning conifers into works of art. He continued the work that people like Jon Spann, Eddie Rezek, and

Jean Iseli pioneered. His grafted standards, often with twisted and knotted stems, were specialty works and highly coveted.

When times were good (and the nursery industry thrived), Boyko Nursery was a treasure trove of specialty conifers. Jim was always on the lookout for new conifers. He especially valued color and "dwarfness" in his searches.

I shared several young plants of my own with Jim, especially *Picea abies* 'Gold Drift' (Gold Drift Norway spruce) when it first became available. I was amazed at the noticeably short time he needed to have over a thousand of this cultivar for sale in a wide range of sizes for his customers.



Jim standing next to *Pinus strobus* 'Slim Jim'.

Jean Iseli and John Mitsch both had a reputation for taking a new plant and having it available in large numbers in a brief period of time, too. Jim worked the same magic. He was a consummate grafter, and I believe he could propagate 'Gold Drift' from scion wood that contained just single buds, which is not an easy thing to do.

One year, I visited Jim and discovered a block of several hundred *Pinus contorta* 'Chief Joseph' (Chief Joseph lodgepole pine) in one-gallon containers. Most were sold, and I was only able to purchase a few. He told me how he had figured out the trick to propagating this problematic plant. His take for two years in a row was over 90%. I found that to be most impressive. Unfortunately, he was never able to duplicate that

success again. Master grafter that he was, he still had problems just like the ones the rest of us do.

When Jim saw what I had achieved with my golden spruce (*Picea abies* 'Gold Drift' × 'Acrocona') seedlings, he did some work along the same lines. He searched for a seedling of *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine) that would be pendulous with twisted foliage. He had a windbreak with *Pinus strobus* f. *pendula* (pendulous form of eastern white pine) and the cultivar 'Torulosa' (Torulosa eastern white pine). The 'Torulosa' trees commonly produced cones with viable seeds. Jim collected the seeds and grew hundreds of seedlings with a pendulous growth habit. He made several selections, but never really found what he wanted. At least six selections have been made and named. *Pinus strobus* 'Blue Petticoats' (Blue Petticoats eastern white pine), 'Blue Tresses' (Blue Tresses eastern white pine), 'Slim Jim' (Slim Jim eastern white pine), 'Octopus' (Octopus eastern white pine), 'Dianne's Soft Shoulders' (Dianne's Soft Shoulders eastern white pine), and 'Bob's Whiskers' (Bob's Whiskers eastern white pine) are the ones, with which I am familiar. There are others as well.

Always on the lookout for oddities in his own nursery, Jim discovered two golden witch's brooms on *Pinus mugo* (mugo pine) that have found their way into some gardens, *Pinus mugo* 'Buttercup' (Buttercup mugo pine) and 'Butternut' (Butternut mugo pine). He kept the original brooms alive through consistent and careful pruning over the years.

Among Jim's other selections were *Microbiota decussata* 'Carnival' (Carnival Siberian cypress), *Cupressus nootkatensis* 'Glitter Falls' (Glitter Falls Nootka cypress) and 'Boyko's Sundown' (Boyko's Sundown Nootka cypress), and *Pinus mugo* 'Patches' (Patches mugo pine). They were all found in his nursery.

When the nursery was severely hit by a poor economy and Jim lost his wife, Judy, he was forced to cut back. He had to do everything without any hired help. Jim was able to survive by entering the medical marijuana growing business. He had recently started to make a comeback into the nursery business with his daughter and grandson. He died before they completed the first stage of their plans.



Jim and Bob Fincham with medicinal marijuana crop.
Photo by Thecla Siquera, Bob's wife.

I will miss visiting Jim whenever I travel to Oregon. We used to go for lunch with Larry Stanley at a local Chinese restaurant. Jim did not care for the spicy dishes and had a palate more like mine; bland. He would invariably order the salt and pepper shrimp, avoiding any of the sauces that typically come with the dish. Even so, he never turned down the opportunity to visit with us and talk plants over lunch.

If there are legends in this world of conifers, Jim was one of them, not only in his achievements, but also in

his humanity. We all know people whom we consider legends and often think of them as bigger than life. It is better to know them as ordinary people who loved working with their plants and who never hesitated to share this love with others.

As I close, I know that Jim is with his high school sweetheart and wife of many years, Judy. I wonder if he is also sharing his conifer ideas with Jean Iseli and Richard Bush and Chub Harper and Dennis Dodge and Gordon Bentham and ...



Pinus strobus f. *pendula* seedlings.

Shady Characters

Conifers Made for Shade

Text Rich Eyre and Photography Ron Elardo and Sam Pratt

Full, Deep, Dark Shade: 3 hours or less of sun.

Taxus cuspidata
(Japanese yew)

'Amersfoort' – vase-shaped habit with rounded leaves.
'Dwarf Bright Gold' – irregular upright yew with golden color.
'Nana Aurescens' – low, flat yew with golden needle edges.

Taxus × media
(Anglo-Japanese yew)

'Viridis' – narrow, dwarf form.
'Stovepipe' – seedling of Hicks' yew.

Tsuga canadensis
(Canadian hemlock)

'Albo-spica' – intermediate spreader with pure-white tips.
'Bennett' – low-spreading, graceful, dwarf hemlock.
'Cole' – prostrate, dark-green needles, exposed upper branch surfaces.
'Everitt Golden' – dwarf upright with bright, golden foliage.
'Gentsch White' – slow-growing, globose, with white tips.
'Horsford Contorted' – dwarf hemlock with twisted branches.
'Jeddeloh' – bright green, spreading mound.
'Jervis' – extremely slow growing upright; congested growth.
'Kelsey's Weeping' – strongly asymmetrical form.
'Pendula' – graceful, dark-green cascade; stake to desired height.
'Stewart's Gem' – bun-shaped dwarf with cinnamon tips.
'Stockman's Dwarf' – dwarf, horizontal grower.

Tsuga caroliniana
(Carolina hemlock)

'Mountain Mist' – superb weeping hemlock with longer needles.

Tsuga diversifolia
(northern Japanese hemlock)

Dark-green foliage, known as the rice hemlock from northern Japan; grows wide and tall and does not burn in the sun.



Taxus cuspidata 'Amersfoort'. Conifer Kingdom, Silverton, OR. Photo by Sam Pratt.



Pinus strobus 'Horsford'. Albers Vista Gardens, Bremerton, WA. Photo by Sam Pratt.



Tsuga canadensis 'Jervis'. Conifer Kingdom, Silverton, OR. Photo by Sam Pratt.



Tsuga canadensis 'Everitt Golden'. Conifer Kingdom, OR. Photo by Sam Pratt.

Partial Shade: 4-6 hours of sun.

Picea abies
(Norway spruce)

'Acrocona' – irregular weeping form with purple-pink cones on branch tips in spring.
'Pusch' – witch's broom of 'Acrocona'; tiny, pink cones in spring.
'Clanbrassiliana Stricta' – superior pyramid for the landscape.
'Cobra' – bizarre tree with serpentine branches; forms a skirt.
'Elegans' – low, flat, nesting spruce with early bud break.
'Hillside Upright' – irregular form, dark-green, congested needles.
'Weeping Blue' – upright grower with pendulous branches.

Pinus strobus
(eastern white pine)

'Blue Shag' – Soft, blue-green needles, with slow-mounding habit.
'Fastigiata' – narrow upright form that becomes large.
'Hershey' – dwarf form from a witch's broom at the Hershey Estate, PA.
'Horsford' – slow-growing globe with a mounding habit.
'Niagara Falls' – dense habit with pendulous, cascading branches.

Pseudotsuga menziesii
(Douglas-fir)

'Emerald Twister' – upright form with twisted branches.
'Fletcheri' – blue-green, irregular, upright dwarf.
'Fastigiata' – narrow, upright form.
'Graceful Grace' – blue-green, upright, dramatic weeping form.

Thuja occidentalis
(eastern arborvitae)

'Degroot's Spire' – tight, dark-green upright; a narrow dwarf.
'Yellow Ribbon' – Narrow upright, tight, with bright yellow color.
'Hetz Midget' – dwarf, dense, green globe.
'Linesville' aka 'Mr. Bowling Ball' – globe with juvenile foliage.
'Sunkist' – bright golden tips on broad pyramid.



Picea abies 'Pusch'. Albers Vista Gardens, Bremerton, WA. Photo by Sam Pratt.



Picea abies 'Hillside Upright'. Adrian, MI. Photo by Ron Elardo.



Thuja occidentalis 'DeGroot's Spire'. Adrian, MI. Photo by Ron Elardo.



Picea abies 'Acrocona'. Adrian, MI. Photo by Ron Elardo.



Pseudotsuga menziesii 'Graceful Grace'. Adrian, MI. Photo by Ron Elardo.

Morning Sun: area that gets cool morning sun and is shaded in afternoon from the hottest sun.

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Abies koreana</i> (Korean fir) | 'Aurea' – spectacular, golden pyramid. 'Green Carpet' – prostrate form with purple cones in spring. |
| <i>Picea glauca</i> (white spruce) | 'Conica' – dense, conical, dwarf Alberta spruce 'Jean's Dilly' [®] – superior, dwarf form of dwarf Alberta spruce. |
| <i>Picea orientalis</i> (Caucasian spruce) | 'Connecticut Turnpike' – irregular, windswept habit. 'Fat Boy' – dwarf, pyramidal form, dark-green foliage. |
| <i>Pinus cembra</i> (Swiss stone pine) | 'Glauca Nana' – great blue-green color with a slower growth rate. 'Pygmaea' – dwarf, compact form with great, blue color. 'Stricta' – columnar form with fastigate branches. |
| <i>Pinus parviflora</i> (Japanese white pine) | 'Bergman' – unique Japanese white pine with twisted needles. 'Fuku zu mi' – compact, wide spreader. |

If you site your conifer(s) in the understory of other trees, you need to know that the roots of existing trees will compete for water with your new tree. Therefore, you must remember to water frequently for more than the first year. Plants that try to get established in existing root masses can take longer to take root.

Editor's Note: If you have conifers in the above conditions or any of the conifers mentioned above, please send a photo (1MB or 300dpi in size) as an email attachment to me at ConQuartEditor@gmail.com. Tell me where the tree is (city and state), who took the photo, how long the tree has been in the ground, where you got the tree (ACS auction, nursery, etc.), and its botanical name.

The Jean Iseli Memorial Award

The American Conifer Society annually awards a \$4,000 grant to a public garden, arboretum, or horticultural institution that emphasizes the development, conservation, and propagation of conifers, with an emphasis on dwarf or unusual varieties.

Jean Iseli was an ACS founder and conifer propagator. This award was established in 1986 in his name.

Iseli Nursery pledges to grant the winner a 50% discount on any plants purchased in conjunction with this award, up to \$8,000.

Proposals must include:

- Name, address, and phone number of the applicant/institution
- Brief description of the plans to utilize the funds
- List of conifers to purchase
- Budget
- Short overview of the mission statement or horticultural background of your institution

Send Applications by email to ethjohnson42@gmail.com, or by USPS to

Ethan Johnson
39005 Arcadia Circle
Willoughby, OH 44094

Deadline for submissions is June 4, 2021. The Iseli Award committee will announce the winner by August 2, 2021.

A Tale of Two Conifers

Text Dorothy Danforth and Photography Laura Dierbeck, MKE Lifestyle



Seen here are the Colorado spruce (l.) and the white fir (r.).

Has a difficult gardening decision ever plagued you, such as having to select one of two very gorgeous conifers to cut down, so that the other tree could thrive? This dilemma confronted me when I observed that two of my trees were growing at top speed and that the branches of each tree were merging with those of the other, causing the lower branches of both to die. How did this happen?

In 2012, I removed some overgrown arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) close to my patio, leaving a large space to develop. I came up with the idea of dressing up the landscape with all blue conifers. I presented this idea to Susan Eyre, co-owner of Rich's Foxwillow Pines in Woodstock, IL, where blue conifers were plentiful in their inventory. Susan recommended two trees that

were each about five feet tall at the time. One was a Colorado spruce, *Picea pungens* 'Bonny Blue'. The other was a white fir cultivar with blue foliage, *Abies concolor* 'Blue Cloak'. I fell in love with these two trees and brought them home.

I knew nothing about spacing potentially 30-foot tall trees and just planted them where I thought they looked good. In addition, I added several more blue and blue-green trees, in order to create a special garden bed. As a longtime piano teacher and a lover of all genres of music, I named my special blue bed "Rhapsody in Blue". All that was missing was to pipe in Gershwin's music. I enjoyed relating this story to people when they came for garden tours. My "Rhapsody in Blue" always impressed visitors.



This is Dorothy Danforth's "Rhapsody in Blue" garden.



Rhododendron occidentale

You are cordially invited to join the
American Rhododendron Society

Benefits: quarterly journal,
 seed exchange, chapter affiliation,
 conventions

ARS Website: <http://www.rhododendron.org>

Little did I suspect that the Colorado spruce and the white fir would zoom up to 20 plus feet tall in eight short years. Their branches mingled together to the point that some of them were dying. I knew something had to be done. My first thought was to donate the Colorado spruce to the Boerner Botanical Gardens in Hales Corners, WI, where I had given trees in the past. In addition, I contacted my friend, Bunny Raasch, a horticulturist, who spoke to several arborists. Their opinions varied.

One arborist thought that the roots had grown together and that moving the spruce would damage the fir, which, by the way, was my favorite conifer. Another arborist thought it was possible to trim the trees, but I believed that this would destroy their aesthetic beauty. To move the Colorado spruce would require a large tree-moving machine that could possibly damage the house since it had grown so close to the roof. The last suggestion, and the one hardest to accept, was to cut down the Colorado spruce and use it as a Christmas tree. This thought horrified me at first, but, eventually, I saw it as the ultimate solution.

I made inquiries about donating the tree to be used as a Christmas tree for an organization. Nothing came of that idea. On the spur of the moment, I asked one of my garden helpers to cut the tree down at ground level. When the tree fell onto the driveway, a helper saw that the top seven feet were undamaged. She took that part of the tree home on the top of her car. The other branches were cut and laid out by the driveway for visitors to pick up for decorations. The lovely 'Bonny Blue' used to have a special meaning. It filled me with joy every time I walked by it. Now, it would make a wonderful Christmas tree.

The lesson of this story is twofold. If you bring home two beautiful conifers that are four or five feet tall, be sure to check their growth habits before planting them too close to each other or too close to the house. It is difficult to give them up when they run into trouble.



Dorothy Danforth with her two trees.



A close-up of the branches of the two trees that had grown together.

Misplaced Trio of *Picea abies* 'Cupressina'

Text and Photography Ron Elardo



Young *P. abies* 'Cupressina' planted three feet from the railing of the deck.

In 2008, at the Hidden Lake Gardens Mother's Day plant sale, I acquired three Cupressina Norway spruces (*Picea abies* 'Cupressina'). They were seven feet tall and had come from Gee Farms in Stockbridge, MI. I was a brand-new member of the ACS and knew nothing of the ACS's conifer size measurements. I planted them in a cluster adjacent to a long serpentine deck. They began growing, happy and beautiful.

About three years ago, I noticed their branches beginning to press against the Plexiglas in the 10-foot railing. Undaunted, the power of their growth began

bowing the railing, the frame of which was made of two-inch x four-inch, 10-foot long, pressure-treated lumber. This past fall, the railing's anchors broke. I could have pruned the marauding branches and reset the railing, but it would have made the trees misshapen. I surrendered the railing to the trees and their natural growth habit and removed it. The deck at that point is only two feet above grade. The trees, by themselves, would keep anyone from harm, who fell into the gentle arms of the trio of 'Cupressina'. What beauty can be found when such gorgeous trees are allowed to do as Nature dictates?!



The trees broke down the railing and extend now two feet into the deck space.

The Importance of Registering Conifer Cultivar Names

Gregory A. Payton, ACS Conifer Registrar and Director of Living Collections at The Dawes Arboretum

International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) name registration is a service that has been in operation for more than 50 years and provides conformity and reference for cultivar names. The ICRA does not conduct trials or judge if one cultivar is better or more useful than another. The authority's sole function is recording distinct cultivar names. Although participation is voluntary, adherence to the standards for cultivar names is highly recommended. These standards are outlined by the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP), which is published by the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS). It is strongly recommended that cultivar names conform to standards set forth by this publication. More information can be found here:

<https://www.ishs.org/scripta-horticulturae/international-code-nomenclature-cultivated-plants-ninth-edition>.

Most plant-group registrars also produce lists of name registrations, and these lists are published as a reference to the public. In addition to publication and confidence that their name will be properly recorded and recognized forever, registrants also receive a certificate suitable for framing!

The Dawes Arboretum serves as the representative for North American conifer registrations, working in concert with the Royal Horticultural Society, RHS Garden Wisley, United Kingdom. For North American registration form requests and submissions, contact

The Dawes Arboretum (Conifer Registrations)

7770 Jacksontown Road

Newark, OH 43056

or email conifers@dawesarb.org.

Forms and instructions can also be downloaded from the Conifer Registration ICRA site here:

<https://www.ishs.org/sci/icralist/51.htm>.

For more information on the program and lists of additional ICRA's, visit the ISHS website at

<https://www.ishs.org/nomenclature-and-cultivar-registration/icra>.



Gregory A. Payton, ACS's new Conifer Registrar.
Photo by Havard Ostgaard, Botanical Software, LTD,
Leiden University in The Netherlands.

ACS Reference Garden Program Update

Text Deborah Merriam

With garden rendezvous and conferences postponed this year, the Reference Garden committee members in the Northeastern Region took the opportunity to engage with several gardens and arboreta and encourage them to apply for ACS Reference Garden status. Four new Reference Gardens have been approved in the Region. There is one pending application in the Central Region and no new gardens in the Western or Southeastern Regions. In addition, the committee worked with Sara Malone to update the Reference Garden pages on the website.

At the end of 2020, we recruited Reference Garden representatives in the Northeastern Region to begin an online series, in order to introduce these gardens to the public. Beginning in February, we will host a series of live presentations via Zoom of four or five Reference Gardens in the Northeastern Region. Sign-ups will be done through the website, and anyone can attend. If this program is successful, we hope that all regions will follow suit on this project.

We personally presented plaques to two new Reference Gardens:

Temple Ambler Arboretum at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. Photo by Brian Snyder.



Left to right

Cat Meholic, Curatorial Horticulturist; Michael Larkin, Northeastern Region President;
Deborah Merriam, National Reference Garden Chair;
Kathleen V. Salisbury, Director, Ambler Arboretum; Michelle Lapp, Formal Gardens Horticulturist;
Hiram Munger, Northeastern Region Treasurer.

Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden, Villanova, PA. Photo by Gerry Merriam (Deborah Merriam's mother).



Left to right

Hiram Munger, Northeastern Region Treasurer; Deborah Merriam, National Reference Garden Chair; Ethan Kauffman, Stoneleigh Director; Michael Larkin, Northeastern Region President.

Ten Types of Cedars that Everyone Should Know.

Text Sara Malone, Website Editor

Why plant a cedar? The short answer is that they are striking garden selections, with lovely textural foliage that can be had in shades of blue, white, cream, or green. To add to that, they are tough plants when given the right conditions. They take well to pruning, are relatively disease- and pest-free, with cultivars that can be had in a variety of sizes and forms.

Cedars are complicated, but that's not their fault. Humans have classified plants and animals within family groups, and we give each group and then each plant within it a name to make it clear which plant we mean. Simple, right? Not so with cedars. Somewhere along the way, plant finders and explorers and then the population at large started calling anything with aromatic wood a cedar. Consequently, we have "fake" cedars, such as western red-cedar, which is *Thuja plicata*, not related to true cedars, and eastern red-cedar, (*Juniperus virginiana*), which not only is not related to real cedars, but is not related to western red-cedar, either! This goes on, with *Calocedrus* and *Chamaecyparis* using "false cedar" in their common names. Fortunately, you can forget about all that for now, because we are going to focus on what we have to call TRUE cedars, those of the genus *Cedrus*, which is a member of Pinaceae, the pine family.

True cedars (and remember, that is all that we are discussing here!) hail from the mountains of the western Himalayas of Asia and the Mediterranean region of Europe, where they are often found at high altitudes. Cedars are generally hardy to USDA Zone 6, although cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) is a bit more tender. They flourish in well-draining soil and do best in areas that replicate their native conditions. This makes them



Cedrus needles are arranged in clusters on short shoots, giving the plants a distinctive texture. Photo by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA.



This isn't even half of this massive weeping blue Atlas cedar at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ. Photo by Sara Malone.

an excellent choice for West Coast Mediterranean climates, but they also do very well in other parts of the US, where they are hardy. New Jersey's Grounds for Sculpture, for example, boasts a magnificent weeping blue Atlas cedar.

Thankfully, we can find cedars for our gardens that will either not get that large or can easily be pruned to keep them the right scale for the other plantings. There are only four species of cedars, but those four yield over 100 cultivars developed for landscape planting. *Cedrus* cultivars are available with blue, green, yellow, or cream foliage. What are the best of these? Here's a list to get you started. We'll begin with blue.

1. *Cedrus deodara* 'Prostrate Beauty'

Prostrate Beauty Himalayan cedar starts us off because it is difficult to imagine a garden that would not be enhanced by its inclusion. It has a low, spreading habit, and its color is a vivid, clear-blue with light-green undertones. This specimen is about seven feet wide, but it can easily be kept smaller by pruning the tips. It holds its color in colder temperatures, when it really glows in the soft, low light of the winter sun, taking on a slightly turquoise hue. Gardeners always seem to be on the hunt for the elusive blue flower; why not add blue foliage as well?

2. *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula'

As noted earlier, this cultivar can get massive, but it doesn't have to! Cedars, with their soft wood, are easily pruned and respond well to pruning. The two (middle right photo) were purchased as "serpentine" (which you can see if you look at the left one in particular) in 15-gallon size and then trained up with rebar



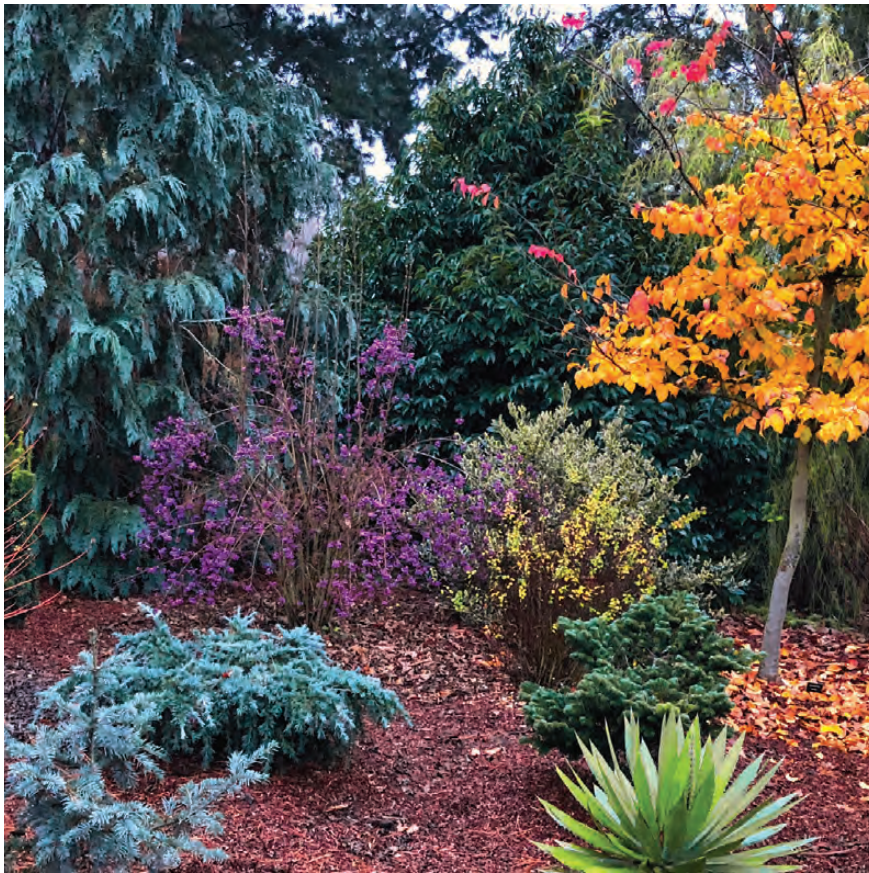
This is *Cedrus deodara* 'Prostrate Beauty'. It has been in the ground for about 10 years, with minor pruning to lift it up. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.



A pair of *Cedrus deodara* 'Glauca Pendula' flanks the front entry of a house in Northern California. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.



This weeping blue Atlas cedar is being trained to be free form in the landscape. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.



'Feelin' Blue' Himalayan cedar, part of a dazzling, autumnal display of color. Photo by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA.



'Devinely Blue' is a classic Christmas tree shape, with blue-green foliage. Photo by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA.

supports to meet in the middle, arching over the door. They are pruned twice yearly, in spring and in fall, mostly to keep the weeping branches from descending too far and creating an unwelcoming (or barricaded!) entry.

3. *Cedrus deodara* 'Feelin' Blue'

For an even richer blue color, try 'Feelin' Blue', which is lower- and slower-growing (this one we classify as a dwarf) than 'Prostrate Beauty' (classified as an intermediate). Like other blue cedars, it holds its color year-round, with some reporting the deepest color in late summer. If you think that blue livens up a summer bed, look at what it does when paired with autumn's hot colors. The purple beautyberry (*Callicarpa bodinieri* var. *giraldii* 'Profusion'), hardy to Zone 3, adds amethyst jewel tones to the cedar's sapphire needles.

4. *Cedrus deodara* 'Devinely Blue'

For an upright, dwarf form, 'Devinely Blue' (named after a propagator named Bill Devine, so NOT misspelled) is a lovely choice. While not as pure blue as the other selections, the foliage has a distinctively blue cast, and the needles are long and graceful. This one never needs pruning if you place it properly. A true dwarf, it is slow-growing and a sedate garden denizen. It is the perfect selection for a small garden, where it can serve as a focal point.

Many other blue cedars are garden-worthy. Likely the one that is the most dramatic is *Cedrus atlantica* 'Sapphire Nymph', worth checking out for the name alone. The reason that it does not make this Top 10 list is that it is extremely brittle and breaks easily. A high wind, a carelessly tossed tennis ball for a dog, even bumping into it can cause significant breakage. So, investigate it if you can provide a safe place for it, as it is a stunner.



Feelin' Sunny™ on the right is a gorgeous, golden, intermediate Himalayan cedar. Photo by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA.

5. *Cedrus deodara* 'Monkinn' (sold as Feelin' Sunny™)

A Monrovia Nursery introduction (hence the botanical name of 'Monkinn'; Monrovia tends to include "Mon" in their introductions, then registering a different name, under which the plant is sold). This cedar is liberally sprinkled with sunny, yellow tips — foliage exposed to sunlight is yellow; anything shaded remains green, which produces a dramatic and brilliant two-toned effect. This is a relatively new cultivar, of which exact origins are not clear, and there hasn't been much time to observe it in the garden. Some sources say that it is shrubby and low-growing, but the specimen above, which was purchased directly from Monrovia, is clearly upright with excurrent (strong apically dominant) form.



Cedrus deodara 'Aurea'. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.



Cedrus deodara 'Gold Cascade'. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.

6. *Cedrus deodara* 'Gold Cascade'

A lovely golden dwarf Himalayan cedar, 'Gold Cascade' will eventually become more conical in form. It starts off broadly spreading, but will grow more conical with age. The specimen in the photo above has been pruned to keep it smaller and flatter than it naturally wishes to

be. Note the dramatic effect of the yellow and blue (*Picea pungens* 'Lucretia') foliage combination. To note, another cedar with great, yellow color is *Cedrus deodara* 'Aurea', which gets big fairly quickly.

7. *Cedrus deodara* 'Cream Puff'

This is one of the best light-colored cedars for livening up the winter landscape, when its creamy foliage brightens even the dullest of days. Left to its own devices, it will eventually become broadly



Almost good enough to eat, 'Cream Puff' is creamier than it is yellow. Photos by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA.



Cedrus deodara 'Snow Sprite' has white-tipped branches. Photo by Sam Pratt, Conifer Kingdom, Silverton, OR. This specimen is in the Jean Iseli Memorial Garden, Boring, OR.

conical or upright. It can easily be pruned to keep it more shrub-shaped, as is the case with the specimen to the left. It has luxurious foliage tipped with a creamy, light-green and can be used as a specimen planting, or as part of a mixed shrub border.

8. *Cedrus deodara* 'Snow Sprite'

Snow Sprite Himalayan cedar is similar to some of the yellow-needled cultivars. However, it has distinctly white-tipped branches, rather than yellow, especially with the flush of new growth in spring (note: in some climates, cedars push new growth twice a year, which means that they stay fresh-looking in late summer). 'Snow Sprite' is classified as a dwarf, and grows at a sedate rate, and, like all cedars, can be pruned easily to slow it down or keep it in a mounded shape.

9. *Cedrus deodara* 'Hollandia'

Lest you think that cedars are only available in blues, yellows, or whites, we'll move now to rich-green selections. One of the best is 'Hollandia', a deep, saturated-green, upright, dwarf Himalayan cedar cultivar.



There are rich-green *Cedrus* cultivars, such as *C. deodara* 'Hollandia', seen right behind the railing lamp. Photo by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA.

There is nothing dusty or reserved about this hue, and good deep-greens are not always easy to find. We have to remember in our quest for dramatic colors not to neglect green! This particular specimen has been pruned infrequently to keep it at its current height and to keep it a bit narrower than it would naturally be.

10. *Cedrus brevifolia* 'Kenwith'

'Kenwith' is one of the only known cultivars of Cypriot cedars (*Cedrus brevifolia*). Cypriot cedar is known for its short, bristly needles that give the plant a scrubby effect than the longer needles of the other *Cedrus* genera. 'Kenwith' is extremely slow-growing and works well in a container, a rock garden, or in a mixed border. Its congested habit is also a distinctive feature.



A true miniature, Kenwith Cypriot cedar can find a home in any garden. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.

Many, many other wonderful *Cedrus* cultivars exist. In fact, almost all of them are garden-worthy plants that even inexperienced gardeners can grow with success, in the right climate. An added bonus is that cedars have decorative pollen cones and very large, bold, seed cones.



Pollen cones on *Cedrus deodara* 'Aurea'. Photo by Sara Malone, Petaluma, CA.



Seed cone on *Cedrus libani* 'Blue Angel'. Photo by Janice LeCocq, Petaluma, CA

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