

2023 Collectors' Conifer of the Year

Text Dennis Lee; Photography Sam Pratt, Conifer Kingdom, Silverton, Oregon

I am so happy to announce that in the 18th year of the CCOY program, we are back in business after its 2022 hiatus. Last year, due to the impact of unprecedented weather conditions, insufficient inventory was available at the time to fulfill CCOY needs. CCOY temptations were first available as a member benefit in 2006 to add enjoyment and excitement to members' landscapes. Besides providing an excellent opportunity to enrich the therapeutic and creative side of gardening, another important aspect of the program is that sales support the Society's efforts to promote conifer utilization and appreciation. Thank you for your continued participation!

For CCOY 2023, we have a dwarf, colorful, interestingly textured, false cypress and two larger growing pines. One pine has a narrow, upright, irregular structure; the other is fuller and more pyramidal and transforms into a brilliant beacon of yellow in winter. And for a historical note and opportunity, two CCOY honorees from 2018 and 2020 are available this time for anyone that has missed acquiring them or needs to have another to make a unique addition to their garden.

So may your conifer passion be assuaged with the following garden gems that offer varied colors, textures, hardiness, and diversity of form. Life is short; indulge and savor!



Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Gitte'

CCOY 2023

***Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Gitte'**

This eye-catching, dwarf, mound-forming, golden-colored Hinoki cypress was found by Peet Schrauwen of Boomkwekerij Schrauwen-Moerings, Sprundel, Netherlands, as a sport on 'Tsatsumi Gold'. It stands out from other Hinoki selections by having a dense tangle of twisted, filamentous branches that emanate in varied directions. It is also known for occasionally producing fasciated growth on the tips of its coarsely textured branches. Growth can be from one to six inches per year, depending on the site's conduciveness to plant vigor. A sunny, well-drained site will result in the best coloration and performance. As typical with most yellow selections, a shadier exposure will cause the plant to become much greener. Expect a remarkable specimen one to five feet high by two to six feet in diameter in ten years. Our offering is propagated on its own roots from cuttings. It is considered suitable for USDA zones 5 through 8.

CCOY 2023

***Pinus banksiana* 'Jack's Bean Stalk'**

This is a choice, unusual Jack pine that has a clever name. It was discovered by Mike and Cheryl Davison, who enjoy hiking and botanizing in the upper Great Lakes and the Cascades. It stands out from other Jack pine selections because it has an incredibly narrow, upright form with an irregular branching habit. Because of such branching, no two plants will conform to each other. Instead, they will assume their own unique, constantly evolving, sculpture-like form. Adding to their natural, artsy beauty are attractive, stiff, short, slightly curved, medium green needles held in bundles of two. Needles are shed after two to three years, so its relatively less dense canopy allows the sculpture's bones to be readily revealed. The combined effects of these characteristics make for quite a standout in the garden without needing much horizontal space. A specimen could be four to 10 feet tall and two to three feet wide in ten years. Jack pine is suitable for USDA zones 2 through 6. Our offering is grafted onto *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine) rootstock, which is adaptable to various well-drained soils. This beanstalk needs a sunny site.





***Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia* 'Chief Joseph'**

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***Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia* 'Chief Joseph'**

This selection of lodgepole pine is often the envy of a conifer connoisseur, and many people have found it challenging to achieve a long-term, handsome specimen. A well-drained, sunny site protected from buffeting winds in the winter and not burdened with long durations of high heat and humidity in the summer are primary criteria for success with this winter wonder. In summer, it appears as an unassuming green but decent-looking pine. As seasonal, colder temperatures arrive, it starts to transition to a bright yellow. As cold weather becomes consistent, this conifer assumes an astonishingly rich and saturated golden glow that takes over the landscape as a focal point. It was found in the Wallowa Mountains in Oregon by Doug Will during a hunting trip and was named after a leader of the Wallowa tribe of the Nez Perce. It grows four to eight inches a year. This pyramidal, winter dazzler could be five to six feet tall and half as wide in ten years. Our offering is grafted onto *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine) rootstock, which is adaptive to many well-drained soils. 'Chief Joseph' is suitable for USDA zones 5 through 8.



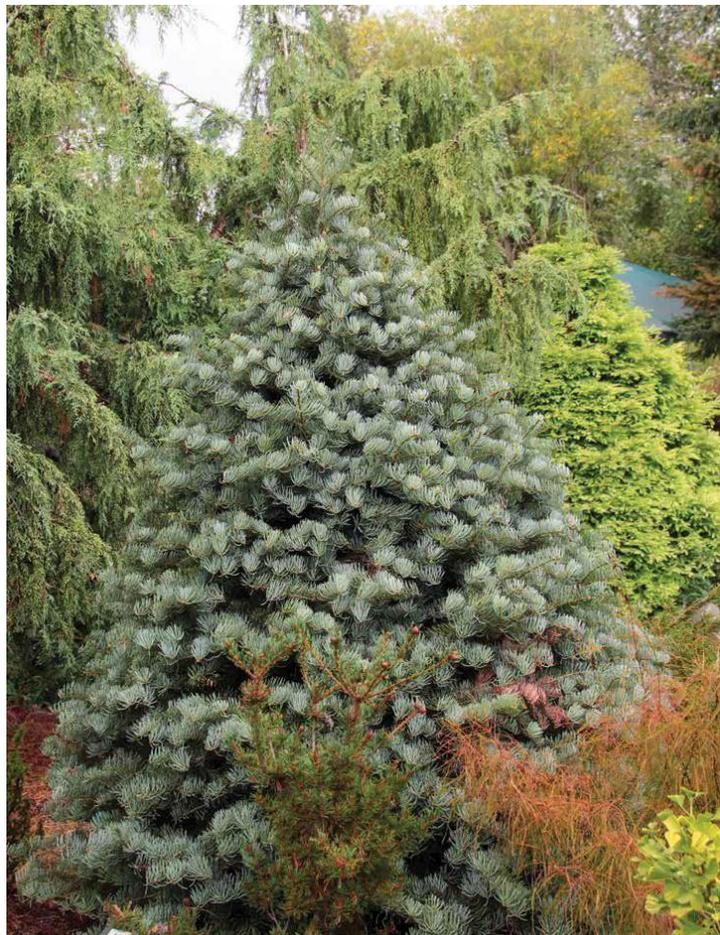
***Cedrus atlantica* 'Sapphire Nymph'**

CCOY 2018

***Cedrus atlantica* 'Sapphire Nymph'**

This gorgeous, prostrate, dwarf selection of blue Atlas cedar is also back on the order form. Its origin is accredited to Pat McCracken of McCracken Nursery in Wake County close to Zebulon, North Carolina. It first appeared as a witch's broom and was introduced in the late 1990s. Growth is typically one to three inches per year. The plant will likely be 10 inches high and 30 inches wide in ten years. Its irregular, flattened form responds well to pruning, if desired, to refine its shape or contain it for a particular space. Be aware that it is considered somewhat of a more delicate plant as its internodes lack the normal elastic strength of the species. Consequently, it is wise not to site it close to high-impact activities where it can risk injury. In general, this should not be a concern for tranquil garden settings, especially considering what the plant can offer in landscape value. Full sun promotes optimum vigor, and well-drained, acidic to slightly alkaline soil is essential. Once established, it is tolerant of drought. 'Sapphire Nymph' is considered reliably suitable for USDA zones 6 through 8. Some success has been reported in zone 9. At its most northerly limit, it is advisable to offer some winter protection to prevent potential discoloration of the needles should severe weather arise. The densely packed, small, stiff

needles are arranged spirally outward around the stems, with the ones at the tip pointing forward and noticeably smaller. Overall, the plant has an appealing, prickly texture but is not that sharp to the touch. This non-aggressive, low-growing conifer stands out with its silvery, bright, soft blue color and a slightly coarse but pleasing look. Our offering is grafted onto *Cedrus deodara* (deodar cedar) rootstock.



***Abies concolor* 'Archer's Dwarf'**

CCOY 2020

***Abies concolor* 'Archer's Dwarf'**

This versatile, dependable, low-maintenance selection of white fir is back on the order form. Its compact, pyramidal form is striking, with branchlets that hang slightly downward and inward on tiered, horizontal branches. The powdery blue, blunt, flat, sickle-shaped needles are prominently held in curved upright positions for a most captivating texture. Yearly growth is typically three to four inches. A specimen is

generally three feet high and two and a half feet wide in ten years. J.W. Archer of Farnham, United Kingdom, originated this cultivar, which was introduced to the nursery trade in 1982. Our offering is grafted onto *Abies bornmuelleriana* (Turkish fir) rootstock, which is more adaptive to varying soil conditions and more heat tolerant than other choices. It does best in a sunny site but also performs well in light shade. It is suitable for USDA zones 3 through 7, although some gardeners reportedly have succeeded in zone 9.

Ordering

The Collectors' Conifer of the Year program is restricted to active members of the American Conifer Society. Purchases are limited to one of each selection per member. Prices can be found on the accompanying order form. Each offering comes with a one-year/ one-time replacement guarantee should it fail to grow during the first year in its appropriate USDA zone. Accompanying each plant will be an anodized aluminum tag with its holder, which identifies the plant as a winner of the American Conifer Society's annual "Collectors' Conifer of the Year" award. Shipping is included in the listed prices. For ordering, please complete the form in this publication. Orders will be filled by the date of receipt until inventory sells out. All orders must be received by February 1, 2023. We cannot ship outside the United States.

The best of *conifering* to all of you!