Dwarf and Unusual Conifers for Midwest Gardens

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What is a Conifer?

• Kingdom: Plant
  • Division: Coniferophyta
    • ...
      – Genera: Abies, Cedrus, Chamaecyparis, Ginkgo, Juniperus, Larix, Metasequoia, Picea, Pinus, Taxodium, Taxus, Thuja, Tsuga, etc.
What is a Conifer?

- Unenclosed (naked) seed located on upper scale contained in a cone (usually).
  - Naked seed or ovule.
Cones
What is a Conifer?

- Woody plants.
- Mainly trees.
- Usually evergreens with needles or scales.
- Timber, lumber, paper, other products.
Evergreen versus Conifer

• Are all evergreens conifers?
Evergreen versus Conifer

• Are all conifers evergreen?
Do all conifers have cones?
Classification of Dwarf Conifers

• Miniature: <1” growth/yr; <1’ growth at 10 yrs.

• Dwarf: 1” to 6” per yr; 1’ to 6’ growth at 10 yrs.

• Intermediate: 6” to 12” per yr; 6’ to 12’ at 10 yrs.

• Large: >12” growth/yr; > 12’ growth at 10 yrs.

• Source: American Conifer Society.
Quick Review of Botanical Names

• *Picea pungens*
• *Picea pungens var. glauca*
• *Picea pungens f. glauca*
• *Picea pungens ‘Glaucia Globosa’*
• *Picea pungens ‘Glaucia Pendula’*
Harper Collection of Dwarf and Rare Conifers
From left: Jack Wikle, Chub Harper, Sam Lovall
Harper Collection Stewards
Coneheads!

Photo credit: NBC.com
ACS
American Conifer Society
Addicted Conifer Syndrome
Where do dwarf conifers come from?

Witch’s Broom – *Taxodium distichum*
Taxodium distichum ‘Gee Wizz’
Witch’s Broom – *Abies concolor*
Abies concolor ‘Hosta La Vista’
Witch’s Broom – *Picea abies*
Picea abies ‘Merrell Broom’
Chamaecyparis nootkatensis

‘Glaucia’

‘Green Arrow’
Use in the Landscape

Focal Point
Use in the Landscape

- Screen, Fence, Hedgerow
Use in the Landscape

- Background
Use in the Landscape

- Foundation

  photo credit: www.finegardening.com
Use in the Landscape

- Groundcover
Effect in the Landscape

• Color
Effect in the Landscape

• Texture
Effect in the Landscape

• Shape, Form
Effect in the Landscape

- Size
Landscaping with Conifers

Conifer Considerations
Abies fraseri ‘Julian Potts’
Fraser Fir
Abies koreana ‘Horstmann’s Silberlocke’
Korean Fir
Abies numidica ‘Pendula’

Algerian Fir
Calocedrus decurrens  

California Incensecedar
Cedrus libani var. stenacoma

Cedar of Lebanon
Cryptomeria japonica  Japanese Cedar

‘Yoshino’

‘Globosa Nana’

‘Birodo-Sugi’
Ginkgo biloba

Maidenhair Tree
Ginkgo biloba

‘Jade Butterfly’
Ginkgo biloba

“Espalier” Maidenhair Tree
Larix laricina  

Tamarack, American Larch
Larix decidua

European Larch

‘Cherry Valley’

‘Julian’s Weeper’
Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Dawn Redwood
Microbiota decussata

Russian Arborvitae
*Platycladus orientalis* ‘Morgan’

Chinese Arborvitae
Platycladus orientalis ‘Franky Boy’

Chinese Arborvitae
Picea omorika

‘Armintrout’

Serbian Spruce

‘Froedenberg’
Picea omorika ‘Pendula’

Serbian Spruce
*Picea omorika* ‘Pendula Bruns’  
Serbian Spruce
Picea glauca ‘Pendula’

White Spruce
Pinus densiflora ‘Umbraculifera’  
Tanyosho Pine
Pinus contorta var. latifolia ‘Chief Joseph’  Lodgepole Pine
Pinus strobus

Eastern White Pine

‘Nana’

‘Globosa’
Pseudotsuga menziesii ‘Pendula’

Weeping Douglasfir
Sciadopytis verticillata

Japanese Umbrella Pine

‘Joe Kozy’
Taxus × media ‘Bean Pole’  Anglo-Japanese Yew
Thuja plicata ‘Whipchord’  Giant Arborvitae Western Red Cedar
Thuja plicata ‘4Ever’ Goldy™ Western Red Cedar
*Thujopsis dolobrata*  False Arborvitae

‘Variegata’

‘Nana’
Tsuga canadensis ‘Cole Prostrate’  
Canada Hemlock
Tsuga caroliniana ‘Labar’s Weeping’ Carolina Hemlock
Tsuga chinensis

Chinese Hemlock
Conifer Bibliography and Resources

- American Conifer Society: http://conifersociety.org
- Iseli Nursery
- Rich’s Foxwillow Pines Nursery
- Gee Farms
- Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens
- Conifer Kingdom
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