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Special points of interest:

- ***Pinus parviflora* has many rock garden uses.**
- **A Dog and Pony Show.**
- **Playing with five-needle pine understocks.**
- **The wolf comes home.**
- **Some Vicent-based humor.**

Inside this issue:

Bob's News & Musings

Pines for the Rock Garden (Part 2)

An alpine area is commonly found in a mountainous area at an altitude near the snow line. The climate is harsh with poor soils causing slow plant growth and all sorts of twisted, misshapen, and dwarf conifers. These plants are not genetically dwarf and if brought down into more conducive conditions they will resume normal growth, provided the conifer survives the transplanting.

In many areas of the world, the alpine conifers are often tight mounds, a condition due to genetics, such as *Pinus mugo* v. pumilio, or animal grazing constantly pruning the new growth. This shape is the most common shape in rock gardens, since most dwarf conifers grow in this way. The pines most suitable for a rock garden that grow naturally in this way were covered in my October issue of this newsletter.

Alpine conifers also develop into small trees with a wide variety of deformities. They may be twisted from the winds or develop flaglike branching, also from prevailing winds. Some may be upright little trees with an open branch structure or with a mixture of live and dead branches. These trees are indicative of cold, windy areas with thin, nutrient poor soils. They add a sense of authenticity to any rock garden.

The pines covered in this issue of my newsletter will be ones that can be grown in this manner. They will often require some judicious pruning to keep them in scale with the garden. Likewise, some of the selections covered in my October issue can also be grown in this manner if they are allowed to gain some size and become too large for the scale of the rock garden. A good pair of pruners will change a formal dwarf conifer into an alpine conifer in short order.

One of the biggest problems in a rock garden is plant growth. The rock garden is a recreation of an alpine setting, but with relatively rich soils and a much milder climate.

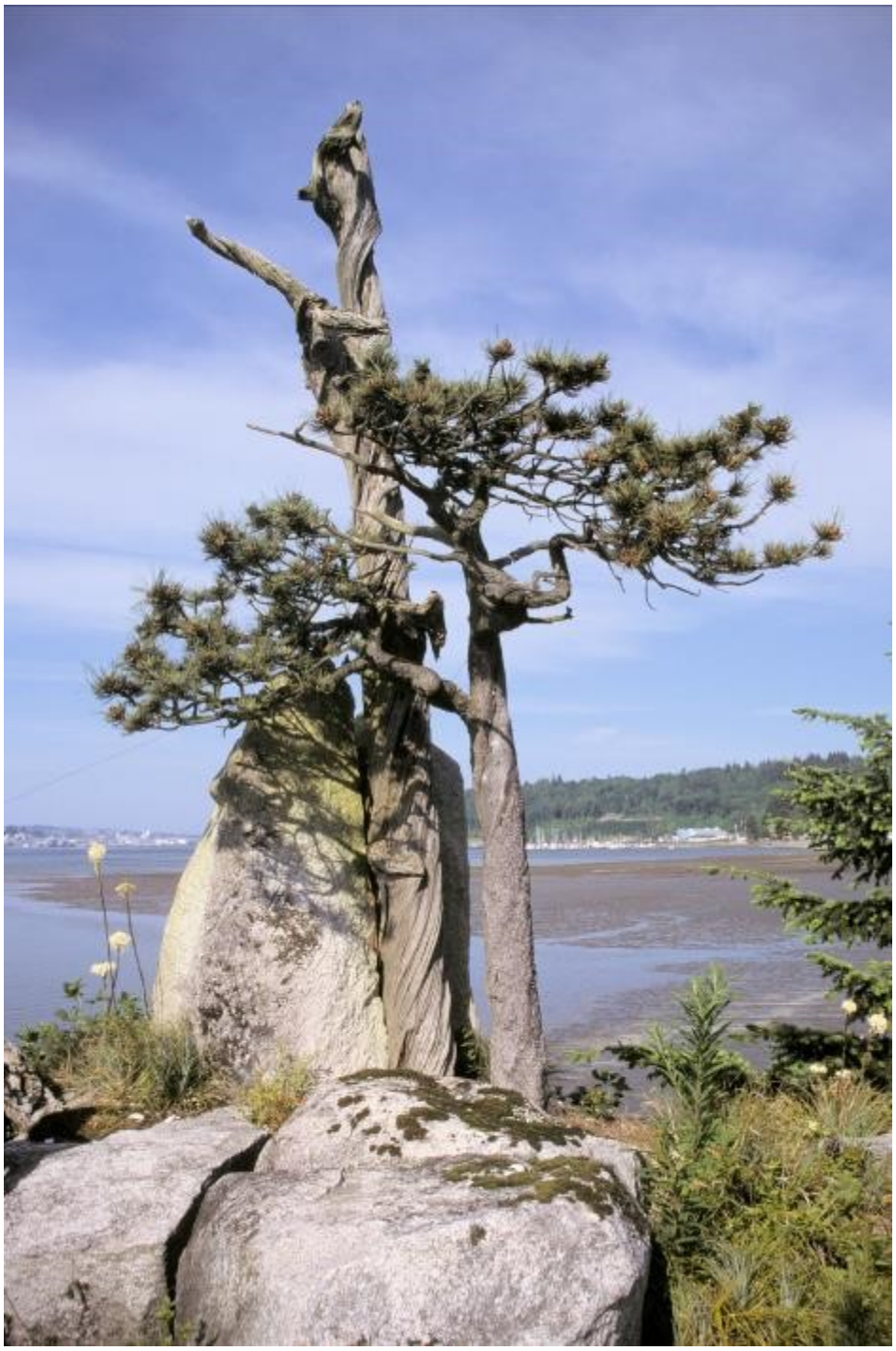
These two things help keep the plants nice and healthy, but they also accelerate their growth.

So, as you read my series of articles about conifer for the rock garden, keep in mind that you are working under conditions that are much kinder to the plants than an actual alpine setting.

Little Tortured Alpine Tree-like Addition to the Rock Garden

The other growth habit that works nicely in the rock garden is that of a twisted, sparsely branched, deformed little tree much like those observed at the snowline in alpine settings. These trees are indicative of cold, windy areas with thin, nutrient poor soils. They add a sense of authenticity to any rock garden.

Elandan Gardens has many excellent examples. One is pictured below.



Pinus albicaulis #1 dwarf

Pinus albicaulis #1 dwarf has never been given a valid name. It is a dwarf, densely branched little tree. It may be as tall as 3 feet (1 meter) in 15 years. With some selective pruning (or abuse), it can easily be shaped into a wind -blown appearance.

Pinus aristata 'Sherwood Compact'

A dwarf, narrowly conical plant with very dense branching, it was first named *Pinus aristata* 'Sherwood Compact' and is generally found under this name. It grows about 2 inches (5 cm) per year. Its foliage is green and lacks the resin ducts present in the *aristata* species. It was introduced about 1960 by Sherwood Nursery, Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. who discovered it as a seedling. Since *aristata* and *balfouriana* have some geographical overlap, and since this selection possesses no resin ducts, I believe it to actually be *balfouriana*. I am using the *aristata* designation here because that is the most familiar name to people.

Pinus contorta 'Spaan's Dwarf '

A dense, globular to elliptical dwarf plant with upright branches, *Pinus contorta* 'Spaan's Dwarf ' can grow up to 6 inches (15 cm) per year. Its foliage is dark green with twisted needles. It originated as a seedling grown by Jon Spaan, Washington, U.S.A. in the 1960's. It is a great addition to an alpine garden.

Pinus densiflora x mugo 'Edsal Wood'

Pinus densiflora x mugo 'Edsal Wood' becomes a miniature green globe with relatively large, brown winter buds. It grows about 1inch (2.5 cm) per year. The new growth has light brown bark and male strobili often appear along the recent year's growth. It was found as a seedling by the late Edsal Wood of Bonsai Village, Aurora, Oregon in a batch of *Pinus mugo* seedlings. Ed grew thousands of seedlings of various conifers every year and always selected anything unusual from each crop. This plant had been set aside and was picked out as having merit by Don Howse soon after Ed's death. It has characteristics of both *Pinus mugo* and *Pinus densiflora*, thus the hybrid designation. Selective pruning can produce a small specimen with an alpine appearance.

Pinus mugo 'Mr. Wood' or *Pinus mugo 'Fish Hook'*

A miniature selection that becomes upright and broadly conical as it ages, *Pinus mugo* 'Mr. Wood' has short, bluish needles. When I first saw this cultivar, a quick glance fooled me into thinking that I was looking at a small Pinus parviflora. Some of the needles scattered through the plant have curved, fishhook-like tips. It grows up to 2 inches (5 cm) per year.

There is an identical plant named *Pinus mugo* 'Fish Hook'. Both of these plants were seedlings from Edsal Wood (see Gone But Not Forgotten). One was given to Talon Buchholz and named 'Mr. Wood', while the other was given to Larry Stanley and named 'Fish Hook'. There is no observable difference in the two plants.

Pinus mugo 'Mr. Wood' is difficult to propagate. The grafting success rate is hit or miss and the survivability through the first year can be horrendous. Then the plant may die at any time for no apparent reason. Those that survive, however, are unique and special additions to the garden

Pinus mugo 'Mops'

Pinus mugo 'Mops' becomes slightly broader than high. It is a good selection for someone wanting a moderately dense selection that can be pruned into the shape of a small tree. Unpruned, it develops into a dense globe 3 feet (1 meter) wide in 15 years. Notice the witches' broom on the 'Mops' below and to the right. This cultivar has a tendency to produce brooms and several have been named.

Pinus nigra 'Oriesok'

Pinus nigra 'Oriesok' is a dense, little plant that grows about 2" (5cm) per year. As it ages, it takes on more of a conical shape, becoming a dense, little pyramid with light green foliage. It originated as a witches' broom that was discovered in 1981 by Jaroslav Kazbal at Rodopy, Bulgaria. The small, tight broom on the large tree led Kazbal to use 'Oriesok' as its name, since the term means "little nut".

Use *Pinus nigra* 'Oriesok' in a rock garden where some upright structure is desired.

Pinus parviflora 'Al Fordham'

Pinus parviflora 'Al Fordham' is a miniature open tree that is quite narrow for its height and has some areas of congested growth. It grows about 2 inches (6 cm) per year. The foliage is light green with short, twisted needles. Summer bud elongation is common and quite pronounced. The late Al Fordham, Head Propagator at the Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, collected three seeds off of a *Pinus parviflora* 'Glauca Nana'. The most dwarf of the three plants grown was named in his honor by the people at the Arnold Arboretum in 1986.

Pinus parviflora 'Blue Lou'

A number of new Japanese white pines have been selected from seedlings with dwarf cultivar origins. John Proudfoot, Methven, Scotland, was very active in this way in the 1990's. He grew a number of dwarf and special seedlings. One of his most exceptional seedlings was Pinus parviflora 'Blue Lou'. It is described as a dwarf, globose selections by many authors. However, in my experience it can grow up to 1 foot (30 cm) per year into a columnar tree with ascending lateral branches. It possesses exceptionally blue foliage with fairly straight needles. John named this plant for his wife.

Pinus parviflora 'Burke Bonsai

A selection that is an irregularly growing, open branched, small tree, with a proclivity for producing adventitious buds on up to three year old branches creating areas of dense foliage on the tree, 'Burke's Bonsai' grows up to 20 cm per year in the landscape. Its foliage is dark green with short, straight, thin needles. A seedling grown by Joe Burke, North Merrick, New York, this selection is exceptional for Bonsai. Burke grew many parviflora seedlings for grafting understock and selected the best for bonsai training. It is also a great plant for the rock garden with its open branching and short needles.

Pinus parviflora 'Blauer Engel' (syn. 'Blue Angel')

Selected in 1964, *Pinus parviflora* 'Blauer Engel' was a mutation on a specimen of 'Glauca'. It is an upright, densely-growing selection that could be used to add a vertical component to a rock garden. The name 'Blue Angel' was given to it in the United States when it was patented under that name. It will require some seasonal work to maintain an alpine-like appearance.

Pinus parviflora 'Glauca Nana'

Pinus parviflora 'Glauca Nana' is a narrow, open, irregular little tree growing about 4-5 inches (15 cm) per year. The foliage is bluish green with short, straight needles, and it was introduced about 1965. Consider *Pinus parviflora* 'Glauca Nana' for a sunny spot in the garden and watch for cones. Seedlings from this cultivar can produce some interesting plants (picture below center). At the same time, it will be a nice addition to an informal garden where it can add a rustic atmosphere with its irregularly upright growth habit.

Pinus parviflora 'Kobe'

Pinus parviflora 'Kobe' is a selection that is slow-growing and conical with straight, thick yellow-green leaves. The branching is dense enough to create a full appearing tree. It will be 6' (2 m) high and about 3' (1 m) wide in twenty years. *Pinus parviflora* 'Kobe' was introduced by Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden, Scotland, who imported it from the Kobe Arboretum, Tokyo, Japan.

Its rate of growth can be restricted for use in a rock garden by pinching candles in the late spring.

Pinus parviflora 'Koko-no-e'

A selection made for Bonsai, in the garden *Pinus parviflora* 'Koko-no-e' makes a small, open tree with areas of high foliage density due to multiple bud development. Its foliage is dark green with short, thick needles, each of which is slightly twisted. A seedling selection from Japan, *Pinus parviflora* 'Koko-no-e' grows up to 6 inches (15 cm) per year in the garden.

Many of the *Pinus parviflora* that were selected for use in Bonsai are excellent selections for growing in a rock garden. Some will require extra pruning and training, but are well worth the effort.

Pinus parviflora 'Mini Curls'

I obtained my start of *Pinus parviflora* 'Mini Curls' from Dennis Dodge. I do not know the origin, but I suspect John Proudfoot of Methven in Scotland. He introduced a wide range of dwarf seedlings of Pinus parviflora that he grew from crossings.

A dwarf upright with short, congested needles crowding the branch tips, this selection is one of the best for use in a rock garden. Unfortunately, it is hard to find.

Pinus parviflora 'Regenhold'

I first saw *Pinus parviflora* 'Regenhold' in the collection of a Dutch friend, Ronald Vermeulen. Interestingly enough, when we discussed his plant, I learned that it was from a witches' broom discovered by Ronald Regenhold from Cincinnati, Ohio.

I have always been slightly amazed at the number of plants I have observed in European gardens, which were new to me, and yet, had originated in the United States. 'Regenhold' is one such plant. Growing up to 2" (5 cm) per year, *Pinus parviflora* 'Regenhold' becomes a dense globe with exceptionally blue, twisted foliage. It prefers full sun with well drained soil, and works very well in a rockery or even in a mixed garden of smaller growing plants.

Since it tends to be higher in the center as it develops, it lends itself to pruning into a miniature upright.

Pinus parviflora 'Richard Lee'

First offered by Gordon Haddow in 2003, *Pinus parviflora* 'Richard Lee' would be an excellent choice for the rock garden. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to grow. The understock must be kept on the plant for about five years. Even then, it can be difficult to keep alive. However, if it does survive, it starts out globose but does become upright with a great alpine appearance. It is similar to 'Mini Curls' but exhibits a tighter/slower growth habit.

Pinus parviflora 'Zuisho'

Pinus parviflora 'Zuisho' was found as a seedling from Pinus parviflora 'Nasu',. It is a slow-growing selection that is very popular for Bonsai. It has short, thin needles and easily forms new growth from adventitious buds. It is often rooted to grow as Bonsai to avoid the scarring from a graft union. In a rock garden, the growth will accelerate, but it is easily controlled to maintain a nice alpine appearance.

Pinus parviflora 'Adcock's Dwarf '

At the Arnold Arboretum in the early 1970's I discovered a dwarf Pinus parviflora with an Arnold Arboretum designation number on it. Upon investigation I learned it was *Pinus parviflora* 'Adcock's Dwarf ', a plant that originated in the early 1960's at the Hillier Nursery in England. The head gardener, Graham Adcock, had grown several *Pinus parviflora* seedlings; and when a well known collector expressed interest in one of them, he kept it under observation and eventually named it. The two extremes of 'Adcock's Dwarf' are shown here.

Pinus parviflora 'Pygmy Yatsubusa'

Pinus parviflora 'Pygmy Yatsubusa'. I don't know the origin of this plant, but its growth habit is intermediate between the two extremes of 'Adcock's Dwarf' (see above). A dwarf selection, 'Pygmy Yatsubusa' becomes a dense, miniature tree with no effort on the part of its owner. It is usually single-trunked with a central leader and dense branching. It grows up to 3" (8 cm) per year. It has light green foliage with short, twisted needles and pronounced winter buds.

A period of extreme cold in the winter may cause the foliage to suffer browning but should not kill either plant, although 'Pygmy Yatsubusa' is less likely to defoliate.

Pinus peuce 'Arnold Dwarf'

Pinus peuce 'Arnold Dwarf' is a dwarf selection that develops into a dense, narrow, little mound. It grows about1 inch (2 cm) per year. The foliage is dark green, and the needles are actually longer than its annual growth, giving it the appearance of a conical mound of needles. It was discovered as a seedling at the Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, about 1965. The original plant is shown to the left about 1980. It is also found under the incorrect name of 'Nana'.

Pinus strobiformis 'Loma Linda'

Pinus strobiformis 'Loma Linda' is one of Jerry Morris' finds. It does not grow in a manner that we expect from a plant of witches' broom origin. A witches' broom is generally a dense mass of branches or foliage in a tree. The mass tends toward a somewhat spherical shape as it ages. Occasionally one will develop an upright growth habit. Propagations from brooms tend to mimic the shape and growth rate of the broom. However, there are exceptions, and some plants do grow differently from the parent broom.

It is thought by some taxonomists that *Pinus strobiformis* 'Loma Linda' is actually *Pinus reflexa*. Whichever one it may be, 'Loma Linda' is a very choice selection of hardy, five-needle pine. It is a densely branched, upright, narrow conical little tree. It grows 4" to 5" (10 cm to 12 cm) per year with clusters of buds at the ends of the branches. The long needled foliage is soft textured with an attractive blue-green color. In twenty years a plant might be 5' (1.6 m) tall by half as wide.

Pinus strobus 'Hillside Gem'

Pinus strobus 'Hillside Gem' was found as a seedling about 1964 by Layne Ziegenfuss, Hillside Nursery, Lehighton, Pennsylvania. It is a dwarf, open tree with sparse, thin branches and areas of congested growth. It grows about 2 inches (6 cm) per year with light green foliage and thin, short needles.

Pinus sylvestris 'Trollguld'

A selection with golden foliage throughout the year, *Pinus sylvestris* 'Trollguld' is very compact and dense. Its color brightens during the winter. The foliage is much finer than the other golden forms of Scots pine. It will grow up to 4 inches (10 cm) per year. Pinus sylvestris 'Trollguld' originated as a seedling from the original golden sport that became *Pinus sylvestris* 'Vargguld' (below right picture).

Brita and Carl-Erik Johansson, Sweden collected seed from the sport and selected a golden seedling from the ones that germinated. Whenever a golden tree is found in the wild, it is a good idea to look around the area for a golden branch that may be producing seed capable of producing such a thing (especially if more than one is found in the area). The same holds true whenever a dwarf plant is found. Somewhere in the area there may be a fruiting witches' broom.

Pinus strobus 'Mini Twists'

Pinus strobus 'Mini Twists' is an exceptional dwarf shrub for any rock garden. It has the characteristics of Pinus strobus 'Torulosa' (thin, twisted needles and crooked branches) but becomes a small shrub rather than a tall tree. It was grown from seed collected from a *Pinus strobus* 'Horsham' growing under a *Pinus strobus* 'Torulosa' by Greg Williams in Vermont.

Pinus strobus 'Mini Twists' develops into a dense little bush with an extensive branching habit. The strongly twisted foliage is green with silver-blue stripes and forms a thick covering that hides the branch structure. It will grow about 2" to 3" (5 cm to 7 cm) per year in the Northwest but less than that in other parts of the United States. Older plants will be slightly rounded and almost as wide as high.

Pinus strobus 'Mini Twists' is the left top picture and to its right is 'Tiny Kurls', a sister seedling. The lower far left is *Pinus strobus* 'Green Twist from the Bickelhaupt, from a witches broom on 'Torulosa'. The bottom right is *Pinus strobus* 'Wiggles', which with its sister, 'Squiggles', shares the same characteristics as the others.

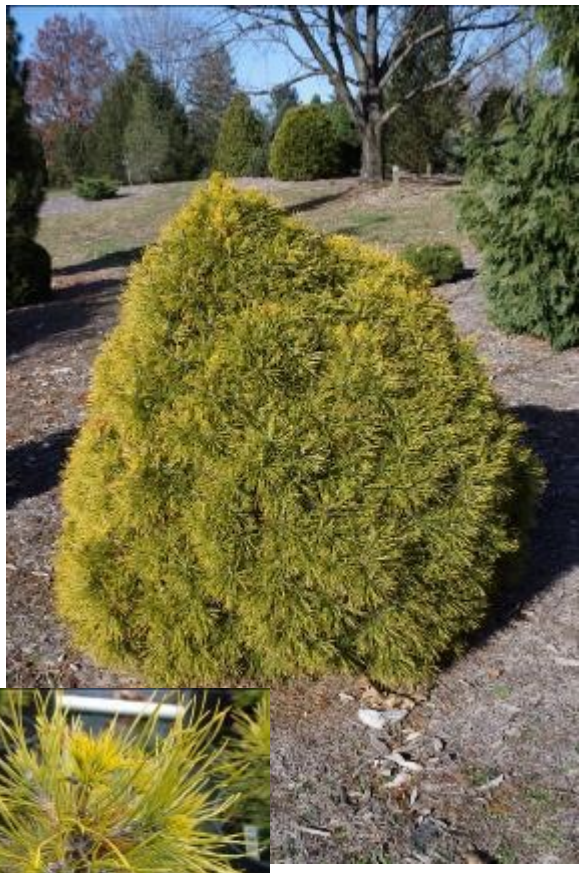
Pinus sylvestris `Globosa Viridis'

Several conifer cultivars have multiple names. That leads to some confusion and is unfortunate. `Globosa Viridis' has even been called *Pinus nigra* 'Pygmaea', adding further to the problem. When someone realized that it was not *Pinus nigra* 'Pygmaea', a debate over its true species ensued. The name *Pinus nigra* 'Globosa Viridis' is still used in some lists. Then, to add to the confusion, the name 'Viridis Compacta' is used almost as often as 'Globosa Viridis'.

Pinus sylvestris `Globosa Viridis' (picture bottom left) is a dwarf form, at first globose then becoming more conical as it develops. These were the important factors used to derive its scientific name. Unfortunately this plant also is known by two other names. These other names are incorrect but are still found on labels in gardens. One name, *Pinus sylvestris* 'Viridis Compacta' was given to it since it is green and compact. However, the actual plant given this name was supposedly a plant with a more treelike shape. Somehow that name was applied to this cultivar, perhaps by Hornibrook, who might have been basing his plant description upon a branch of 'Globosa Viridis'. The third name was given to it when it was first imported into America fifty years ago. Whoever shipped the plant from Europe had it mis- labeled as *Pinus nigra* 'Pygmaea' based upon a 1923 description by Hornibrook.

Pinus sylvestris `Globosa Viridis' will grow about 2" to 3" (5 cm to 8 cm) per year, attaining a height of about 3' (1 m) in approximately fifteen years. It is densely branched with many smaller twigs growing from the main branches in various directions. The foliage is dark green with a pronounced twist to the needles. New, short needles are formed during the summer. These needles surround the winter buds. The two different sets of needles create a very unusual feature unique to 'Globosa Viridis' and another cultivar named 'Moseri'.

During the summer months *Pinus sylvestris* 'Moseri' is easily mistaken for 'Globosa Viridis' since they are so similar. Their foliages are identical, and the only barely discernable difference is the shape. *Pinus sylvestris* 'Moseri' grows wider and lower than 'Globosa Viridis'. During the winter, however, the difference is striking. *Pinus sylvestris* 'Moseri' becomes gold, adding brightness to the winter garden. They both like full sun and well drained soils.



Exciting Plants for the Future

Top left– *Pinus contorta v. latifolia* 'Taylors Sunburst' WB

Top right– *Pinus cembra* 'Matterhorn'

Bottom right– *Pinus monophyla* 'Wiggles'

Bottom left– *Pinus aristata* 'Silver Alibi'

Snow Woman: The Wolf Part 3

The aspen trees were starting to turn gold in the higher elevations. Winter was close, and snow could start falling at almost any time.

He was thinking about that prospect when Nightwalker stopped her aimless circling and stared in one direction. Night Buffalo moved closer to her and saw that she was staring along a trail of elk hoof prints. They followed the tracks for two hours when they spotted a bull elk grazing on some brush. It was within the range of his Henry. Taking careful aim, he shot it directly behind its shoulder, punching a hole through its heart.

The elk was a dead animal but responded to the bullet's impact by taking off at a run. Each bound covered ten yards, and it was quickly out of sight. Nightwalker had taken off after the elk when Night Buffalo fired his rifle. He whistled, and Nightwalker stopped and waited for him to catch up. Together they followed the blood trail left by the elk. They had to track it for several hundred yards before spotting its body near the base of a cliff. Night Buffalo cautiously approached the elk. He did not want a wounded bull elk attacking him. He quickly determined that the elk was dead. He sat his Henry against its body and prepared to eviscerate the dead animal with his Bowie Knife. He noticed that Nightwalker had stopped and was sniffing the air.

When he knelt beside the dead elk, Night Buffalo felt a strange sensation. He sensed danger nearby. Maybe Nightwalker sensed it as well. He reached for his Henry Rifle and just as his hand touched the stock, he heard a blood-curdling scream from almost directly overhead. The distraction caused him to look up as a large cougar leaped from a point nearly twenty feet up on the cliff face.

Leaving the rifle, he rolled away from the elk, causing the cougar to miss raking its claws across his body. He stopped in a kneeling position with his Bowie pointed at the cougar. His rifle was on the other side of the cougar, and his pistol was back in the village.

The big cat had landed slightly off balance as it tried to compensate for the sudden movement of Night Buffalo. With a snarl, it turned and prepared to pounce but was diverted by Nightwalker as she attacked, sinking her fangs into its left hind quarter. The cat gave out a roar and quickly turned, throwing Nightwalker to the side. As it prepared to attack this new threat, Night Buffalo leaped onto the cougar, plunging his Bowie Knife directly into its heart.

Nightwalker stood beside the large cat, fiercely growling. Then she raised her head as if to sniff the air, and howled for the first time. She stopped with an expression of surprise on her face and then bayed once again.

There was some howling in the distance as a response to her action. Night Buffalo figured he had better get busy with the elk and cougar before unwelcome visitors showed up. He skinned the cougar and removed a hindquarter from the elk, which he wrapped in the cougar skin. The rest of the elk he hung in a tree out of the reach of any predators. He would be back tomorrow with a pony to haul it back to the village.

Once they returned home, everyone became excited when they saw the cougar skin and later heard the story about how Nightwalker had saved his life. That evening Snow Woman fed Nightwalker a large piece of elk meat and thanked her for saving her husband's life.

During the night, Nightwalker was restless. She was in her usual place next to Laughing Waters but showed a need to leave the tepee. Wolves were howling in the distance as if they were calling to her. She did not understand why she felt such a strong compulsion to answer them. She refused to leave the side of Laughing Waters and stayed in her place.

Night Buffalo heard the wolves and thought they were trying to get at the elk carcass where it hung out of their reach. He was sure he had attached it high enough to keep it safe but was still worried about it.

Snow Woman also lay awake, listening to the distant wolves. She sensed that they were communicating with

Snow Woman: The Wolf Part 3 (cont.)

Nightwalker and thought that soon Nightwalker would have to leave them and go her own way.

Everyone except Laughing Waters had a restless night. The sounds of the wolf pack had the whole village on edge. When the sun appeared the next morning, a group of warriors had gathered near Night Buffalo's tepee prepared to drive them away.

Night Buffalo went along with the warriors. He figured that some of them could help bring the elk carcass back to the village. He left as Snow Woman was feeding Laughing Waters. Nightwalker left at the same time. She had to respond to the calls of the wolf pack. It was an almost irresistible call, and she was not sure why.

As the warriors went to where the elk hung in the tree, Nightwalker trotted in the opposite direction. Even though the wolf pack had been lively east of the village during the night, she sensed they were now to the west.

She came across their sign a few miles from the village. The alpha male had marked trees in the area with his urine. She was vaguely familiar with the scent. She became cautious and continued her trek.

Nightwalker was three-quarters grown, and thanks to her excellent care, she was already one of the most massive wolves in the Bighorn Mountains. She weighed almost 150 pounds and in perfect health. She was nearly a full year away from attaining sexual maturity and producing pups.

There were nine wolves in the pack. An Alpha pair led the pack. The male had lost his first mate the previous year, and her skin had served as a sleeping fur for Laughing Waters and Nightwalker. The smell of the Alpha male had lingered faintly on that fur and Nightwalker associated the scent with something wicked. There were two other pairs of wolves and three young ones about her age in the pack.

The pack surrounded Nightwalker as the Alpha female approached to stand directly in front of her. Nightwalker was uncertain about what to do. When the female bared her fangs and growled, Nightwalker sensed that she should place her belly on the ground, turn her eyes to look downward, and put her tail between her legs.

Instead, she stood erect and responded in a threatening manner, much as her mother had done nine months earlier. Her challenge was quickly accepted, and the Alpha female went for her throat. A shot rang out, knocking the Alpha female off her feet. She was dead before she hit the ground.

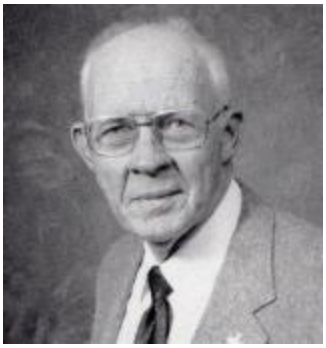
Snow Woman quickly reloaded her Sharps Rifle in case the pack came after her. She did not have to worry. The wolves scattered and ran off into the woods. Knowing that Nightwalker had probably run off to answer the call of the wolf pack, Snow Woman had followed her trail. Night Walker had not grown up among wolves and might get herself into deep trouble. Leaving Laughing Waters in the care of a friend, she had taken the Sharps Rifle and left the village.

When she shot the Alpha female and the pack scattered, Nightwalker must have gone with them. Snow Woman just shook her head as she removed the skin from the dead wolf and rolled it to take home. She felt sad that Nightwalker had run with the pack and hoped that she would return.

She was surprised when she entered her tepee, and Nightwalker sat beside Laughing Waters, having her ears pulled. She had decided for now that this was her home, but Snow Woman knew that one day the call of the pack would be too great to resist.

Blast From the Past

J. Peter Vermeulen



When I started collecting conifers in the 1970s, there were two major wholesale nurseries in New Jersey that were known as the places to purchase rare conifers in wholesale numbers at wholesale prices. Vermeulen & Son in Neshanic Station was one and the other was Verkade Nursery in Wayne, New Jersey. Both of these nurseries had been operation for several generations and were well respected. Layne Ziegenfuss knew the owners of both nurseries and gave me contact information. I waited until I obtained a nursery license before I attempted to purchase plants from them. Neither of the nurseries dealt with retail customers.

Peter Vermeulen was the owner of Vermeulen & Son Nursery, which was started by John Vermeulen, his father. I always enjoyed visiting the nursery and looking at the stock plants while I waited for my purchase to be loaded into my pickup truck. I used to purchase #1 and #3 container sized rare conifers for my collection. In those sizes I was able to buy one of a kind as long as I met their minimum order and had a nursery license.

It was under Peter's supervision that the nursery was able to produce Bonsai plants for sale that had undergone some training and were in special pots for instant sales. The conifer list had also become one that was second to none. I used to study their catalog every year and make up my want lists. Then I would pare the list down to something I could afford.

Peter did not attend to formative meeting for the American Conifer Society at Joel Spingarn's place. I suspect he had a conflict because someone as important as he was to the world of conifers would definitely have been invited. That did not stop Peter from being very supportive of the society. When I became President of the American Conifer Society, one of the first things I did was to appoint Peter as our unofficial Chaplain. He took to the position right away and would open many of our meetings with a prayer.

Peter was a very religious man who actually practiced what he said. His catalogs were full of religious sayings and quotes. They were not just hollow words to him. He was the only Chaplain the Conifer Society ever had and he performed admirably.

Blast From the Past: Readers' Comments

Ethan Johnson shared a few things about Al Fordham and Jerry Morris that my readers might enjoy. I am sharing Ethan's comments here for you with his permisssion:

Al Fordham

Al Fordham was good friends with the man who had been Plant Propagation Professor at the University of Connecticut, Dr. Sydney Waxman. Dr. Waxman and his wife Florence had two children that attended the same high school that I attended in Storrs, CT. They were all very good and pleasant people. Al and Syd were friends that often went "brooming" together. At first, Al told me he was the tree climber. When that became physically impractical, Al would harvest the brooms by shooting them out of the trees. Both Al and Syd grew the seed and grafted the scions from the brooms they collected from rural parts of New England at their respective nurseries at the Arnold's Dana Greenhouse and grounds and at UConn's Horticultural Greenhouse and at a research plot on East Road in Storrs. Al made a demonstration of the variation of seedlings raised from a dwarf Hinoki cypress (Chamaecyparis obtusa) next to the cold storage building, and there were many dwarf conifers planted on a hillside by the Larz Anderson Bonsai Collection, around the headhouse and the field beds, all inside a fence that separated the nursery from the rest of the Arboretum whose grounds are open and free to the public 365 days a year.

I was introduced to Al Fordham by C.W. Eliot Paine in 1983 at the Case Estates in Weston, MA that were then maintained by the Arnold Arboretum.Al was a real plantsman and the first Arnold Staff member I had the pleasure to get acquainted with. After I was hired as a Curatorial Assistant Al would come into the Plant Records Office to see Jennifer Quigley, my supervisor. Al instructed me that when asked where I work, I was to say "I work for the Arnold Arboretum" not at. When he visited he would tell stories, and I listened. Al started working for the Arnold Arboretum at a young age, and Ernest Henry Wilson was the "Keeper". According to Al, Wilson would drive his car around the grounds fast and come to long skidding stops. Al then looked directly at me as he assumed I knew that Wilson and his wife died when he rolled his car on a road in Worchester, MA, and that look meant I should take care when driving.

Jerry Morris

Jerry Morris came to the ACS Central Region Meeting in northeast Ohio that followed the first CR Mtg. at Hidden Lake Gardens in Michigan. He and Chub Harper, along with a few other CR luminaries were discussing conifers outside the offices of Lake County Nurseries in Perry. When Jerry was introduced to me by Chub, he gave me an "assignment". Find or breed a hemlock (Tsuga) that would survive the Colorado climate. I allowed that that was essentially impossible given the moist climates that hemlocks are adapted to, and expressed no more interest. Jerry was simply engaging in a bit of initiation by sending me to look for a "left handed monkey wrench".

Thank you, Ethan for sharing these tidbits about Jerry and Al.

Peter Vermeulen is the November "Blast From the Past". If any of you would like to share a story or two. Send it to me and I'll share it with all my readers.

Conifer of the Month: *Calocedrus decurrens* 'Berrima Gold'

When I lived in Lehighton, Pennsylvania, I came across a California incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) in a garden center. I loved the emerald green foliage and the odor of the crushed foliage. I was very happy when it survived our cold winters and reached over ten feet (3 meters) in height with never a sign of any burn. I sold it with my collection when we moved to Oregon in 1986.

I had thought of adding another to my collection many times but just never did. Then I visited Australia in 1990 and discovered a golden form with fantastic color. It is a selection with bright yellow foliage throughout the year with the following "enhancements". In the spring the yellow is a deeper shade of yellow and in the winter the foliage becomes frosted with a rich orange coloration. Couple this foliage color with the cinnamon brown, flaky bark and a real winner is born.

An upright, columnar tree with flattened sprays of yellow foliage, *Calocedrus decurrens* 'Berrima Gold' will grow at a rate of about 6 inches (15 cm) per year as it develops into a showpiece in the garden. It is densely covered with foliage, which can be thinned to expose the beautiful bark on older specimens. It is not as hardy as the species.

Calocedrus decurrens 'Berrima Gold' was found as a seedling by Claude Crowe, Berrima Bridge Nursery, Australia sometime before 1980. It has to be propagated by grafting onto the species. I imported two young plants when I returned from Australia to introduce this selection into America. It was a very interesting experience hand carrying fifty assorted conifers from Australia through customs and USDA Inspectors in the Los Angeles Airport.

Conifer of the Month: *Calocedrus decurrens* 'Berrima Gold'

Tree of the Month: *Acer palmatum* 'Skeeter's Broom'

Discovered as a witches' broom in *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' in Pennsylvania by Skeeter Rod, *Acer palmatum* 'Skeeter's Broom' combines some of the 'Bloodgood' characteristics, such as cold hardiness and excellent red color, with an excellent growth habit. It produces many upright branches and develops into a tall, narrow tree with bright red foliage that it maintains throughout the growing season.

I had planted one of these next to an *Acer palmatum* 'Ogon' in my Eatonville Garden, and as they grew, I enjoyed the color contrast they created in that part of the garden. The bright red foliage of the 'Skeeter's Broom' worked very well next to the yellow-green foliage of the 'Ogon'.

Acer palmatum 'Skeeter's Broom'

Teacher Observations: Dog and Pony Shows for the Principal

Administrative personnel's classroom observations have always been a part of teaching. Administrators need to keep track of what is happening in the school and improve the teaching methods of the staff. They use classroom observations as their primary tool for these duties. However, I have always questioned their effectiveness. A principal must be able to maintain a professional relationship with his teaching staff and use observations as a method for improving instruction, not eliminating teachers.

I recall one example in the English department while I was at Weatherly. I got to know Warren, an English teacher who used different techniques in his instruction. Unfortunately, the district replaced him at the start of my second full year, possibly due to him playing the guitar during class as a part of his instructional technique.

His replacement, Dave, had some major discipline problems. I heard many complaints about his lack of classroom discipline while seeing little help from the administration. He was let go at the end of his first year. I considered the administration's lack of support to be a red flag. I thought observations were supposed to be a tool to help teachers, not just a way to eliminate them.

I had gotten friendly with Jack, the principal, who sometimes kept me company after lunch. We would watch students before classes resumed. I could always tell what he ate for lunch because he would be wearing some of it on his tie and shirt. I felt he needed to do something about that to maintain a professional appearance. But, of course, I was not going to be the one to tell him about it.

Jack thought he could pretty much say whatever he wanted to me. Perhaps that was because Jim, the guidance counselor, and I were close friends, and Jack felt that Jim was his close friend (they paddled kids together whenever Jim could not avoid it). But when Jack's conversations evaluated various high school girls on their looks, I was unsure how to react. I tried not to encourage him, but he seemed to think I was interested in such discussions. So I wondered how I could respect any evaluation of my teaching that came from him. His lewd comments would color any suggestions he had about my methods.

When I left Weatherly for Tamaqua High School, I entered a world with a much more formal relationship between the administration and faculty. According to an agreement between the district and teachers, the principal wrote observations in a specific format. In addition, there were two evaluation forms the principal filled out for every teacher. One was a short form, and the other was a long form with much more detail.

I always wondered about administrators' universal faculty evaluation procedure in those days. First, the teacher got advance notice a month before the classroom observation date. Then a pre-observation meeting was held to review the teacher's planned lesson. This meeting was necessary since the principal often had no

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idea what was happening in the classroom on any particular day.

At Tamaqua, we had to turn in daily lesson plan summaries on a Friday for the following week. Supposedly, the principal, Max, would read these plans and know what was happening in every class. I say supposedly because I got caught turning in one-word lesson plans one year. I had done it for almost six weeks before getting caught. After that little episode, Max put me on a particular checklist for several months.

After the administrator observed the lesson and produced a written report for "the file," a post-observation meeting was held with the teacher. This procedure meant the teacher prepared a lesson to impress the observer and keep everybody happy.

If the teacher "screwed up" the lesson with all that notice, they needed a lot of help. Depending upon the tenure situation of the teacher, a plan of improvement could result. Such a plan might involve detailed weekly lesson plans and additional observations.

Experienced teachers never worry about doing anything special for an observation. We know we are observed daily by over 120 observers who matter- our students. We do a "show" for them every day. The principal is just another body among many.

Some teachers, especially inexperienced ones, constantly worry about any visitation by an administrator. So they tend to prepare elaborate "dog and pony shows" for the big day.

I recall one teacher at Eatonville High who prepared elaborate lessons for her administrator observations. Of course, the students would comment on those lessons because they were out of the norm.

I have always believed the principal must drop in randomly to observe teaching performance. Then they will know what is going on in the classroom. But, of course, the principal needs to watch with several goals in mind: give a pat on the back for good things, a kick in the ass for bad things, and be a resource to help the teacher improve.

Every teacher can always benefit from helpful input from any observer. However, the problem is that teachers tend to be the most insecure people around regarding job security. For example, suppose the principal is a rare visitor to the classroom and only points out negative aspects of the teaching techniques. In that case, the teacher will develop fear toward the principal and be one "unhappy camper." The "drop-in" observations then take on the aspect of harassment. But handled correctly (helpfully and positively), they are more effective than a "dog and pony" show. Then no teacher should feel threatened (many will anyway).

When I started teaching in Washington State, I was surprised that no daily lesson plans had to be prepared and turned in to the principal for the upcoming week. It seemed to be a rather lax situation that benefited the ill-prepared teacher. However, such a teacher will eventually need a different career since being unprepared daily leads to disaster.

A classroom near the principal's office usually leads to constant observations, especially if the classroom door is not closed. Even a principal who seldom leaves their office will be aware of the activities in that classroom. I know that from personal experience during my first year at Weatherly.

Eatonville High School had two separate buildings and a cluster of portables. The science wing, where I taught, was in a building that did not include the principal's office. Therefore, he seldom came into our hallways. Likewise, any administrators rarely visited the portables.

I spent my first years at Eatonville in a portable classroom (single-wide trailer). Five of us were in portables, and we enjoyed being in them. Happily, the principal left us to our own devices and stayed out of our way. It was too much effort to leave his building and cross a driveway to visit our classrooms. But we did not mind the lack of frequent oversight, and the presence of air conditioning for the hotter months kept us happy.

Readers' Comments

The following email exchange was triggered by an article I wrote in my October newsletter. I thought my readers might enjoy the valuable information that is being shared in the exchange by several nurserymen. The first email is at the end and the latest email is at the beginning. I copied the emails from my server and did not change the order or the information being shared. I just used the first names of the people involved.

Thanks for the additional info, Sam. We occasionally struggle with low take on P. pumila too, so this is an intriguing thought.

Ted

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We have also grafted bungeana, cembroides, & monophylla to sylvestris with better success than using strobiformis.

As mentioned earlier, we will be grafting pumila to sylvestris this winter because we often have low grafting success with them on strobiformis. I will note, however, that pumila does fine on strobiformis long-term, but our "take rate" with pumila has been low lately, so I thought it may be worth a try!

I have seen no visual signs of weakness in these graft unions, nor have I encountered them breaking at the junction, so at least in 10-15 years of growth, many plants that struggle with 5-needle understock, perform better on sylvestris.

-Sam

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I suspect the root rot occurred as a result of the failure of the graft union. Food was not getting to the roots and the parviflora was not getting any decent amount of water back from the roots. I had branch grafted parvifloras where individual branches went bad and died, meaning the problem had to be with the graft union over time. Possibly the knit was not 100% and the understock gradually walled off the graft, sort of like wound healing. Just a thought.

When I was messing around with growing my own understock, I once grew P. mugo v. rostrata for understock. It is upright and not twisted like the other varieties. Did you ever test the graft unions by testing mechanical strength? Did you try other five needle pines on sylvestris?

Bob

==========

This is an interesting discussion!

We have had great success growing some parviflora on Pinus sylvestris.

Varieties that seem to perform better are Bergman, Kinpo, Ogon-janome, & Fubuki nishiki are a few that come to mind.

After having purchased some beautiful Ogon janome from Fisher Farms that were already 8-10 years old and had no burning or signs of root rot, which is what I attributed sudden parviflora death to, I noticed one was regrowing with sylvestris root stock. Now 5-6 years later the plants are about 15+ years old and still outperform their counterparts grafted on white pines.

Additionally, I know that Jason Hupp has increasingly grafted parvifloras onto mugo understock with striking success!

Some pumila seem difficult to graft on white pine as well so we will be trying those on sylvestris this winter as well.

Very fascinating phenomena!

Cheers, gentlemen.

Sam

==========

Hi Dennis,

Thanks for sharing.

Over the years I have consistently lost 'Hagaromo' and 'Goldylocks' for no apparent reason. They generally had developed good root systems and died after the spring flush, usually starting at about five years.. I figured it must be graft failure similar to what happens with Tsuga canadensis. To test that theory, I got a 6 foot tall 'Goldylocks from Jim Boyko that he made by grafting over ten scions onto the branches of a large Pinus strobus. It developed nicely until bottom branches started dying. The upper ones looked great. Over three years the dichotomy of health indicated failure of graft

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unions on the branches, especially when the problem appeared to be spreading.

I tried grafting onto thunbergiana but always had poor success. It is a fairly universal understock for pines and I had other species work on them. However, thunbergiana is not root hardy and in containers the winter losses can be severe. John Mitsch told me a story how one year they successfully grafted several hundred pines onto thunbergiana. The following winter the cold killed them all.

I tried growing parviflora from seed to use as understock. I still think that is the best answer for specialty grafting. On a large scale, it would not work. The seedlings take too long to develop size and they are not nice, straight seedlings with stem caliber.

Glad you liked the newsletter.

Bob

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Hi Bob,

Enjoyed your October Newsletter. I always seem to find some wonderful gems of information and entertainment. Much appreciated! You are the consummate educator. 👏

One thing in this issue which I found particularly interesting was:

Pinus parviflora 'Hagoromo' is a dwarf selection that develops into a dense, globose bush, becoming more conical as it ages. Many of the branches will have small cones develop at their terminal ends. The foliage is bluish with short, strongly twisted needles. The growth rate is about 2" (5 cm) per year.

This plant has long been one of my favorites, but it does appear to have a problem. I have always propagated it by grafting onto *Pinus strobus*. This understock works well for *Pinus parviflora*, but sudden death is not uncommon for established plants. Analysis seldom reveals any disease or insect problems, and the compatibility appears to be satisfactory.

However, *Pinus parviflora* 'Hagoromo' seems to have a survivability rate of only about twenty years. I have had universal loss of old plants, grafted at ground level and grafted onto 3' (1 m) high standards. Other collectors I have talked to have the same problem. This may be a plant that has a definite life span. If it does, twenty years is a good length of time since most landscapes need renovation after that long anyway.

I agree and have experienced the same thing you describe on the cultivar Don Howse once told me was more correctly 'Hagaromo seedling'. However, my personal experience suggests the *P. parviflora* graft compatibility issue with *Pinus strobus* under stock is not unique to 'Hagoromo'. Unfortunately, I have seen it on many other cultivars. The time of failure is as you describe it ~ 15-20 years after the graft.

This rather dramatic total plant collapse is especially disappointing when the scion was something really special like 'Tanima no yuki', 'Aoi', or 'Kinpo' and occurs just when the plants are becoming spectacular and irreplaceable at that size and age. I did post mortems on all those dramatic plant sudden deaths. The failure sequence was essentially identical. The conifers were cut into sections. I had professors from Michigan State University examine the brown needles shedded, their roots and numerous trunk cross sections. They and staff could find no explanation for the failure except graft incompatibility.

The issue has become a personal "pet peeve". Clearly a superior under stock for *P. parviflora* exists and is black pine (*P. thunbergii*/*thunbergiana*). The thousands of bonsai plants several hundred years old which exist with the *P. parviflora*/*P. thunbergii* combination is pretty dramatic evidence that particular graft combination, FAR outperforms the 20 year P. strobus under stock choice. I recall as a new ACS member, being advised by Chub Harper to seek out *P. parviflora* cultivars with black pine under stock. At the time didn't know why and wasn't savvy enough to ask why he recommended it. I followed his advice and found a P.p. 'Bergman' on black pine and it is doing fine as a 40 year old. Bob Tomayer from Waverest Nursery took scion from the Harper and used black pine.

When grafters are confronted with this matter, they throw up their hands and say, black pine is not readily available. Still seems a shame and a waste. Economic theory suggests there was a demand, there would be a supplier. Might even be a selling point if properly marketed?

All the best!

Dennis

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FAMILY TREE OF VINCENT VAN GOGH

His dizzy aunt ---------- Verti Gogh
The brother who ate prunes ---------- Gotta Gogh
The brother who worked at a convenience store ---- Stop N Gogh
The grandfather from Yugoslavia ---------- U Gogh
His magician uncle ---------- Where-diddy Gogh
His Mexican cousin ---------- A Mee Gogh
The Mexican cousin's American half-brother ---------- Gring Gogh
The nephew who drove a stage coach ---------- Wells-far Gogh
The constipated uncle ---------- --Can't Gogh
The ballroom dancing aunt ---------- Tang Gogh
The bird lover uncle ---------- Flamin Gogh
An aunt who taught positive thinking ---------- Way-to-Gogh
The little bouncy nephew ---------- Poe Gogh
A sister who loved disco ---------- Go Gogh

The brother with low back pain ---------- Lum Bay Gogh

And his niece who travels the country in an RV --- Winnie Bay Gogh

I saw you smiling . . .. there ya Gogh

Bits 'n Pieces

You might have guessed that I will be doing additional conifer genera cultivars that are suitable for the rock garden as a series in future newsletters, and you'd be right.

However, my December issue will cover the details of creating the hardscape and preparing it for planting.

I already showed the Coenosium Rock Garden at South Seattle College being constructed in a past issue. In my upcoming December issue, I will show the construction of a large rock garden at my former Eatonville property.

I recently completed my first thriller-mystery novel. I will be sending it to agents to see if one of them might be interested in representing me in a search for a traditional publisher. Several appeared to be interested at a recent Seattle writers' conference.

Next month I plan to use KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing) to self-publish my Civil War novel. I have shared several excerpts in past newsletters. I plan to do print form and also an ebook.

After I complete Volume Two of my Civil War book, I will work on making my thriller-mystery novel into a continuing series.