

## 2018 Collectors' Conifer of the Year

Whether you relate to ACS standing for the American Conifer Society or reference your Addicted Conifer Syndrome, here's an opportunity to add interest and enjoyment to your conifer collection and landscape. In addition, the CCOY program is an important means of supporting the Society's efforts in conifer education and utilization. Please indulge as your desires and passions drive you.

For the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the program we are offering two conifers, noted for their contrasting form and colorful foliage. One has horizontal layers of bright, silvery blue, short sprays that produce creamier colored new growth. The other has an upright form with distinctive slender, elongated, golden foliage. Both can be looked upon as "designer plants" that embolden a garden setting with color, texture and form.

***Cedrus atlantica* 'Sapphire Nymph':** This prostrate, dwarf selection of blue Atlas cedar is accredited to Pat McCracken of Zebulon Nursery, North Carolina. It originated as a witch's broom and was introduced in the late 1990s. Growth is typically 1 to 3 inches per year. In 10 years the plant is likely to be 10 inches high and 30 inches wide. Its irregular, flattened form responds well to pruning if it is desired to refine its shape, contain it for a particular space, or there is a need to deal with broken stems. It can also be staked to any desired height and allowed to cascade from there. It is considered a somewhat delicate plant as its internodes lack the normal elastic strength of the species. Consequently, it is wise not to site it close to where high impact activities can risk physical injury. In general, this is not a great concern for tranquil garden settings, especially considering what the plant can offer in landscape value. Full sun promotes optimum vigor and well-drained soil that is acidic to slightly alkaline is also very important. Once established, it is tolerant of drought. 'Sapphire Nymph' is considered reliably suitable for USDA zones 6 through 8, and anecdotally performs well in zone 9. At its most northern limit, it is advisable to offer some winter protection to prevent potential discoloration of the needles should severe weather arise. Otherwise, the densely packed, small, stiff needles are arranged spirally outward around the stems with the ones at the tip pointing forward and being noticeably smaller. Overall, the plant has an appealing prickly texture that is not that sharp to the touch. This non-aggressive, low growing conifer stands out with sparkling, bright color and distinctive form.

***Platycladus orientalis* 'Franky Boy':** This unusual, fine textured Chinese arborvitae originated around 1990 from Frank Nursery in Heiligen Eiche, Austria. It arose in a seed bed of another *Platycladus* cultivar, 'Elegantissima'. What

captivates the eye with 'Franky Boy' is its bright yellow, airy, filamentous, upright texture. The yellow is more pronounced in full sun and is also enhanced by the lime green foliage deeper inside the plant. In colder weather, the yellow begins transforming to hues of orange-butterscotch and bronze. Additional color and interest arise when the small, bluish-green cones form. They also stand out by having a hooked horn-like protrusion at the top of the scales. This multi-stemmed plant responds well to shearing and a good clipping is recommended to maintain a proliferation of fresh, golden threads. Otherwise, it may start to look unkept. Growth rate is relatively slow, generally 4 to 6 inches per year. In 10 years, it can be expected to be 3 to 4 feet high and 2 to 3 feet wide, depending on site conditions and attention from clippers. 'Franky Boy' is suitable for USDA zones 5 through 9 and tolerates heat very well. It is not particular to soil type as long as there is good drainage. 'Franky Boy' can be used to brighten a garden spot as well as provide contrasting wispy foliage.

**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. The cost is \$75.00 for either 'Sapphire Nymph' or 'Franky Boy'. Each offering comes with a conditional one year/one time replacement guarantee. 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 award of "Collectors' Conifer of the Year". Shipping is included in the above costs. For ordering, please complete the form in this publication. Orders will be filled by date of receipt until inventory sells out. All orders must be received by February 1, 2018. We cannot ship outside the United States.

Happy *conifering* to all of you!

Dennis Lee  
Chair, CCOY Program