



# Your Garden

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By Jan Riggerbach

The landscape is never dull, especially in the fall, at Rich's Foxwillow Pines in Woodstock, Illinois (50 miles northwest of Chicago). Owners Rich and Susie Eyre's collection of dwarf spruces, pines, and other conifers include a peacock's range of colors from yellow and orange to green, blue, lavender and purple.

Besides adding color, the shapes of these small-scale trees—weeping, column, pyramid, mounding and vase forms—lend a sculptured look to yards. The dwarf trees are easy to maintain Rich and Susie say, because they require little pruning, yet seldom outgrow their spaces. They do best in well-drained soil and full sun.

Some dwarf trees grow so slowly; they won't get big in your lifetime. Other varieties simply stay small. The American Conifer Society considers trees 10 to 15 years old miniatures if they're no more than 2 to 3 feet tall, dwarfs 3 to 6 feet, intermediates 6 to 15 feet, and larges 15 feet or taller. Though the farm specializes in dwarfs, it sells all four sizes.

Rich and Susie landscaped their 6-acre nursery with hundreds of varieties and display them along curving paths and water gardens. Unusual flower varieties line the walkways as well.

Rich jokes that his nursery is like an adoption service, where he tries to find good homes for his trees. Like a doting father, he loves them all, but points out a few super performers for Midwest gardens (heights are for 10-year-old trees).

Two Norway spruces make Rich's list: Elegans, a 3-foot-tall globe shaped dwarf; and 6-foot Acrocona, with a compact, irregular shape and purple-red cones on the branch tips in spring. He also prefers Montgomery, a 6-foot Colorado spruce, with striking silver-blue needles and the shape of a bush.



Among hundreds of pine varieties, Rich favors Beauvronensis, a 3-foot Scotch pine, with a dense globe shape and light-blue-green needles; and Umbraculifera, a 5-foot Japanese red pine, with an umbrella shape. The bark develops a beautiful orange color with age.

Other choices include DeGroot's Spire, a 4-foot arborvitae, with a narrow, columnar shape; Jervis, a compact, upright 2-foot Canadian hemlock that tolerates shade; and Glauca Pendula, a 6- to 7-foot false cypress that's a weeper with pendulous, dark-green branches.

Prices at Rich's Foxwillow Pines range from \$25 for a small tree in a 1-gallon container to more than \$1,000 for an unusual 6-foot-tall variety. You also can buy young trees in 1- or 3-gallon pots by mail (add 25 percent for shipping and handling) Call ahead to see if your selection is available.

The nursery is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays April 1- November 15. To order a catalog (\$2) contact: Rich's Foxwillow Pines, 11618 McConnell Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098 (815) 338-7442.