

Some Examples

Here are some examples of the many excellent plants that are suitable for planting in an alpine trough:

Conifers, Broadleaf Evergreens & Deciduous Shrubs

- *Betula nana*
- *Buxus microphylla* 'Nana'
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Gold Fern'
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Golden Sprite'
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Hage'
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Leperchaun'
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana'
- *Cotoneaster* 'Cooperi'
- *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Tanzu'
- *Juniperus communis* 'Compressa'
- *Juniperus communis* 'Gold Cone'
- *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Pancake'
- *Picea abies* 'Little Gem'
- *Picea glauca* 'Jean's Dilly'
- *Pinus mugo* 'Slowmound'
- *Pinus parviflora* 'Adcock's Dwarf'
- *Pinus strobus* 'Horsford'
- *Thuja o.* 'Degroot's Spire'
- *Ulmus minor* 'Jacqueline Hillier'

Perennials

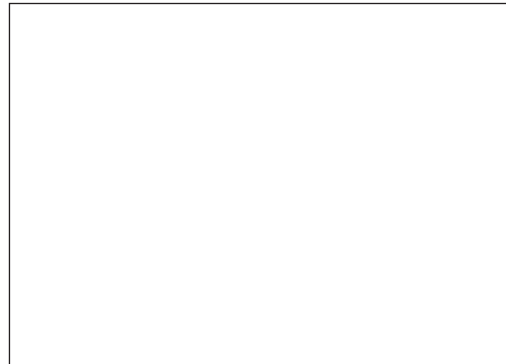
- *Dianthus freyni*
- *Dianthus lacinata*
- *Dianthus simulans*
- *Hedera spechly*
- *Hosta*, smaller types
- *Lewisia* ssp.

For more information

- American Conifer Society
www.conifersociety.org
- North American Rock Garden Society
www.nargs.org
- *Gardening with Conifers* by Adrian Bloom
- *Rock Garden Plants* by Baldassare Mineo



Available at:



www.bearcreeknurseries.ca



Why Troughs?

Traditionally, alpine troughs are hand carved stone or pseudo-stone receptacles that are used as containers for a mixture of alpine perennials and dwarf conifers. This specialized form of container gardening allows those with limited space to create a miniature landscape. Alpine troughs offer a



more effective display of diminutive plants and can provide a more suitable growing environment for plants that may require specific growing conditions (e.g. excellent drainage). In the restricted space of a trough, the growth rate of plants is slowed, similar to bonsai, so slow-growing plants that are typically grown in the garden can also be effectively used in the trough.



Planting and Maintenance

Your attention to soil, fertilizer, water, and winter insulation will allow the plants in your trough to flourish for many years. All conifers require well-drained



soil, and a soiless mix containing pine bark, peat, and perlite will provide the trough with excellent drainage. A regular watering schedule throughout the year is essential with special attention given to periods of active growth or when the weather is dry. A top dressing of poultry grit or

pea gravel is sometimes used to control water evaporation, soil erosion, and also serves as a backdrop for plants. Fertilizer is essential to maintain plant health. Slow release fertilizers formulated for use in containers and hanging baskets are well suited for troughs and are readily available. Barring any tender plants, the alpine trough can be left outside for the winter. In exposed areas where the trough is subjected to cold, harsh, drying winds and sun, pine or spruce boughs inserted into the ground and tied at the top teepee style will give the trough all the protection it needs.

Choosing Plants

Miniature and dwarf conifers, broadleaf evergreens, deciduous shrubs, and perennials are particularly well suited for planting in troughs.



Carefully read the tag to ensure that the plants you choose won't outgrow your trough too soon. Sometimes the words 'dwarf' and 'alpine' are misleading. Many plants that are

marketed as 'dwarf' or 'alpine' are not true dwarfs or alpines! Be careful the check the eventual height and spread of any plant and the time it takes to achieve its mature size. Miniature conifers grow less than 1" (2.5cm) per year and dwarf conifers grow from 1"-6" per year.

Keep in mind that a plant will lose one zone of hardiness when planted in the garden. So if your trough will be in zone 6, select a plant that is hardy to zone 5.

A light pruning in the spring can be beneficial to maintain a plant's desired shape. By pruning lightly you can also keep a plant's overall size in check and extend its viability in the trough. Once a plant outgrows its home in the trough it can very successfully be removed and transplanted out into the garden.