



# Benedictine Bits

## The Pines of Saint John's



Did you know that most of the pine and conifer trees punctuating the landscape at Saint John's were planted by the early Benedictines? The monks missed the swaying pines of their German homeland, so Father Adrian Schmitt, a descendant of foresters from Germany, wrote to his forester father and brothers who then sent him conifer seeds by sailing ship. From this, Father Adrian established a nursery of thousands of seedlings by Stumpf Lake. The first seedlings – red pine, white pine, Scots pine, and Norway spruce – were planted beginning in 1896 on 10 acres just south of the prep school and are the oldest documented reforestation in Minnesota. More plantings were completed in 1906, 1911, 1920, 1927, and throughout the 1930s on Pine Knob, near the Chapel, and by the footbridge. From the beginning, the monks of Saint John's Abbey have been committed to honoring the Benedictine value of stewardship, one tree seedling at a time. More than one hundred years later, these towering pines are an iconic and identifying part of the Saint John's scenery.

summarized from *The Nature of Saint John's* with collaboration of co-editor Jennifer Kutter  
Aerial photo courtesy of Michael Becker