



Kevin Milaeger

# Milaeger's

## Pine Cone Ornaments--- A Symbol of Life

Kevin Milaeger

**Pine cones are one of the most popular** glass figural Christmas ornaments---as well they should be, since Christmas historians tell us that pine cones were the very first molded glass Christmas ornaments. In 1857 a German glass artisan used a wooden cookie mold to create the first molded glass ornament. Before that time, glass ornaments were in use, but they were not created with molds. They were round balls (kugels), quite heavy, and impractical for hanging on a tree. Later, by the late 19th century, the technique of blowing glass in a mold was perfected; ornaments became much lighter, and ideal for use on trees. In a short time, the colorful figures became very popular.

Later, by the late 19th century, the technique of blowing glass in a mold was perfected; ornaments became much lighter, and ideal for use on trees. In a short time, the colorful figures became very popular.



Japanese pine cones



German and Polish pine cones

The center of the glass blowing cottage industry was Lauscha, a small village in the middle of Germany's Thuringian forest (just north of Nuremberg.) It seemed logical to the glass artisans, when searching for design

inspiration, to turn to naturalistic objects, such as pine or fir cones, mushrooms, acorns, and other familiar objects. They fit in well with the fertility aspect of the evergreen Christmas tree. A cone, after all, is an elaborate cluster of seeds. It all seems fitting, since the purpose of the ornaments is to celebrate the birth of Christ.

With the development of lightweight glass ornaments, pine cones and many other types of ornaments quickly appeared on Christmas trees throughout Germany and the

With the development of lightweight glass ornaments, pine cones and many other types of ornaments quickly appeared on Christmas trees throughout Germany and the



rest of Europe. Demand was high. There were many molds made of every subject so the ornaments are found in various shapes and sizes, and of course colors. Later, American, Russian, and Japanese artisans



Russian pine cones



American pine cones

created their own versions of these wonderful objects. So now we have many types of pine cones (and other ornaments) to sort out and appreciate.

My sister Kris began collecting glass pine cones some years ago, maybe as early as the late 1970's. She has a couple of trees decorated exclusively with pine cones. It didn't take me

long to appreciate Kris's collection and to start one of my own. If you have yet to appreciate these fine ornaments, now is your chance to start. We are offering a pretty nice selection of vintage pine cones in our stores. Most are from Germany or Poland, with some from America, followed by a few from Japan and Russia, and a few we aren't sure of. They all have their own charm. Of course, manufacturers continue to produce new pine cone ornaments. We have a number of new styles that come from several companies. All are worthy of your consideration.



Part of Kevin's personal pine cone collection

Please [email me](#) if you have any questions or comments. If you are interested in purchasing ornaments pictured in this blog, please contact Lori at 262.693.2040 x158 or [lori@milaegers.com](mailto:lori@milaegers.com).