

Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 21 No. 4

Fall 2004



Courtesy of NYBG



An exhibit at the New York Botanical Gardens, coinciding with the re-opening of their refurbished conifer collection, runs from October 30, 2004, through January 30, 2005. Read more on page 27.

Right: *Thuja occidentalis* 'Emerald' at the Cox Arboretum in Georgia.

Below: *Thuja occidentalis* 'Golden Tuffet,' also at the Cox Arboretum.

Turn to page 6 to read about more arborvitae cultivars.

Tom Cox



Tom Cox



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Cover photo: *Thuja occidentalis* 'Gold Drop' in the garden of Charlene and Wade Harris. See the article beginning on page 12 to read more about this cultivar.

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Fall 2004
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In my first president's message, I would like to thank Dennis Groh and Marvin Synder for their efforts and patience while preparing me for this position. During his time in office, Dennis stressed the need for and the appreciation of volunteer efforts by our members. I would like to continue on that course. There is a central core of folks who provide the primary energy of the organization, and we need to expand that core. We will be asking for help from both old and new members who possess a willingness to help the organization prosper and grow.

Others in this issue will discuss the terrific meeting we had in Ohio, so I will just say that it was a record-setting gathering, and it will stand as the benchmark for the success of future meetings.

Focus on local "rendezvous" events

"What is the organization doing for its members?" I have heard this question on several occasions. At first glance, it is apparent to long-standing members that the Society provides an excellent

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Quarterly that continues to expand and excel. Further, we coordinate four major gatherings each year and are developing a database for conifers on our Web site that is designed to help those seeking information about or access to conifers. We are a charity organization and provide funds to arboreta through several

*It takes only three things
to pull off a rendezvous:
a little work, a little time,
and a little courage.*

means. But the important product that we provide is *opportunity*.

Gary Whittenbaugh and Flo Chaffin have both demonstrated that small local meetings are successful in gaining new members. These rendezvous allow small private garden visits which may be more relevant to the average gardener than are the large arboretum tours. Camaraderie develops through the sharing of common problems and solutions during these rendezvous. These small meetings have become increasingly popular in Iowa and serve as a model for meetings in all the regions. George Okken's grafting class in the Northeast is another example of a successful local meeting format.

So what exactly is a rendezvous? Typically it is a one-day event structured around visits to between four and six gardens. It is held on a weekend to reduce possible conflicts with Monday-to-Friday work commitments or kids'

school schedules. Invitations are sent to all members in the immediate region, and each person is encouraged to bring a guest. A small fee is collected from those that wish to have brunch. Attendees provide their own transportation, so RSVP is requested but not required. The Society will reimburse organizers for costs of mailings and handouts distributed at the time of the meeting.

It takes only three things to pull off a rendezvous: a little work, a little time, and a little courage. Frequent Central Region rendezvous organizer Gary Whittenbaugh admits that he may have more fun than any of the attendees!

Local events are likely to attract a segment of our membership that is unable to attend the larger, more costly regional and national meetings. Charlene Harris, who has served as our National Meeting coordinator, has made every effort to keep costs at a minimum. However, meals, buses, banquet halls, speakers, and equipment drive the base cost of a meeting beyond many members' budgets, especially our younger members – the Conifer Society's future! The local rendezvous format removes this barrier to participation.

I see no reason why we cannot successfully organize 20 rendezvous meetings throughout the country next Spring. The best time is usually between May 15th and the first weekend in June, so let's get to work!



EDITOR'S MEMO

Summer is gone and autumn is upon us. Rather than fight the change in seasons, I share with you my top three reasons to enjoy the coming of winter:

- #3 – Deciduous conifers are turning color and shedding their needles, providing conifer collectors an opportunity to educate passers-by who ask, “Why is your pine tree dying?”
- #2 – The higher the ratio of evergreens to deciduous plants in your garden, the more confidently you can sit back and enjoy a soothing beverage as neighbors drag rakes and lug leaf-blowers around their yards for four weekends in a row.
- #1 – Pruning conifers and evergreens in late fall produces a free supply of material for making unique holiday garlands. Be the only one on your block to have Hinoki falsecyc-

press and golden arborvitae roping draped above your front door!

Photo contest deadline approaching

Now that we have staved off that end-of-summer depression, I hope that you will choose to participate in our upcoming photo contest in the Winter issue. Since the issue's theme is **gold and variegated conifers**, all photo submissions should relate to that topic in some way, even if indirectly. Show us a plant you recommend, or share a close-up of those golden needles. Use your imagination.

Entries will be judged by the Editor based on overall visual appeal, and the winner will receive a one-year membership renewal. Runner-up prizes may be awarded as well. If we get a good response, we'll continue the photo contest in each issue.

Please check the Conifer Quarterly

Publication Dates

Issue	Calendar Quarter	Deadline to submit articles	Publication Date (approx. mailing)
Winter	Jan/Feb/Mar	Oct 31	Jan 15
Spring	Apr/May/June	Jan 31	Apr 15
Summer	Jul/Aug/Sept	Apr 30	July 15
Fall	Oct/Nov/Dec 31	July 31	Oct 15

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section of the Web site (conifersociety.org) or contact me if you are unfamiliar with the photo submission guidelines. Thanks and good luck!

In this issue

While the Winter issue promises to be a great one, there is plenty in our current issue to satisfy your conifer appetite. Several articles about our featured genus, *Thuja*, provide a general overview of the arborvitae (from Tom Cox) as well as specific accounts of seed-propagation experiments (from Clark West) and cultivar recommendations for the upper Midwest (Charlene Harris) and the Southeast (Maud Henne).

Then, read the latest news from the New York Botanical Garden regarding their restored conifer collection, followed by recaps of the 2004 Merit Award presentations made during this summer's meetings. Learn what Marvin Snyder and Dick van Hoey Smith have done to enhance the progress of the Conifer Society and the field of conifer collecting.

A look back at this summer's national meeting in Ohio, by meeting co-chair Bill Barger, accompanies photos of the meeting events sent in by several members in attendance. Finally, Don Howse shares a refreshing account of the Dutch Conifer Society's visit to Oregon in August – after reading it you will feel as if you were traveling with them, singing on the bus and visiting some of the region's notable conifer destinations.

Best wishes for the remainder of 2004!

Anne

Special color photo section to highlight the Winter issue

The Winter issue will launch our photo contest (*see Editor's Memo at left for details*) and feature **gold and variegated conifers**, with even more color pages to show off your favorites!

In addition to our color covers, a special 8-page color section will display some of the best gold and variegated conifers – based on members' input – in their full glory. The Editor must receive your photos by *November 15th*.

Remember when we saw ...?

The Spring 2005 *Conifer Quarterly* will feature your **conifer-related travel stories**. We'd love to hear about your most unusual, surprising or hilarious memory from a Conifer Society meeting, vacation, or drive along the highway.

Plan now to send your description, short article and/or photo to the Editor by *February 10th*.

Arborvitae in Your Ornamental Conifer Garden

by Tom Cox

Observations prove that Thuja aren't just for hedges anymore

All 35 species and cultivars of *Thuja* on display in the Cox Arboretum here in Canton, Georgia, are proving themselves worthy of at least one role in the landscape, so I am pleased to share some of my favorites with you in this issue of the *Conifer Quarterly* that features this genus.

Depending whether you consider Oriental arborvitae under the now-obsolete name of *T. orientalis* or using its new classification *Platycladus orientalis*, *Thuja* is a genus containing either five or six species. This article will discuss all six, two of which are from North America and four from eastern Asia. They are commonly named arborvitae – Latin for “tree of life” – and sometimes referred to as cedars, as in western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) and northern whitecedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). But these are not the true cedars, which all belong to the genus *Cedrus* and are not native to North America.

Thuja, pronounced (Thoo-ya) range from very tall evergreen trees exceeding 100 feet (30 m) in height down to dwarf specimens less than one foot (30 cm) tall. Many of the smaller forms are excellent plants for small-scale landscapes or rock gardens, and due to their myriad colors and interesting forms, they are quite versatile. As I travel around the U.S., I see *Thuja* planted in virtually every arboretum and botanical garden from Minnesota to California to Florida

to Pennsylvania. They are used in every situation from foundation plantings and accents to screens and hedges.

Thuja occidentalis **American arborvitae, northern whitecedar, or Western tree of life**

“Western” here refers to the western world, as opposed to the Far East, or Orient. Early in the 16th century, this species was recognized for its medicinal value. The French explorer Cartier learned from the Native Americans how to use the tree’s bark and foliage to reduce fever and treat scurvy. Since its main native range is from the southern part of the eastern half of Canada and the adjacent northern part of the U.S., I have been surprised at how well the species performs here in the southeast. My observation is that it is not as vigor-

Below: *T. occidentalis* ‘Linesville’



All photos by Tom Cox

ous as it might be in a cooler climate. In its native environment, the species can attain heights of 40 to 50 feet (12–15 m) at maturity and can live for over 400 years in swamps or in other lowlands and over 1,000 years on limestone cliffs. Northern whitecedar is highly susceptible to fire damage because its bark is thin and has a high oil content. It is preferred by whitetail deer as a food source and thus can sustain major browse damage. The only insects that I have ob-

served here in Georgia are bagworms and spider mites, and neither have been a serious problem.

Here in the south, and possibly in other regions, they prefer moist, well-drained soil and are not particular as to soil pH. We grow them in full sun and consider them fairly trouble free. As with almost all conifers in the arboretum, we give them lots of water in the summer, but once established they are fairly drought tolerant. Pruning is a bit tricky on this species; since old wood will not produce new growth, pruning must be done regularly without cutting beyond live foliage.

There are over 100 commercial cultivars in the market, and many are very similar – an example of sloppy naming and introduction. Of the 17 cultivars that we grow, here are my favorites:

‘Degroot’s Spire’ forms a narrow columnar specimen that tops out at around 10 feet (3 m) tall and 1 foot (30 cm) wide at the base. For best form, look for specimens that have a single leader, and plant in full sun.

‘Emerald,’ which originated in Denmark, was introduced into the U.S. as ‘Smaragd’ but nurserymen here changed the name to ‘Emerald’ or ‘Emerald Green.’ It is a narrow, compact pyramidal form that grows to around 10 feet (3 m) tall by 3 feet (1 m) wide.

Left: *T. occidentalis*
‘Degroot’s Spire’

Below: *T. orientalis*
‘Beverly Hills’



This cultivar has performed well in the south and retains its emerald-green foliage in winter – the only cultivar of this species that I’ve observed with this characteristic. It’s one of my favorite conifers.

‘**Linesville**’ (‘Bobazam,’ Mr. Bowling Ball®) forms a broad, globe-shaped, light bluish-green dwarf that’s only 3 feet (1 m) high and wide at maturity. This is a new plant for us but already another of my favorites.

‘**Malonyana Aurea**’ is one to consider if you want a screaming yellow accent. Since it’s not yet mature, I’m guessing it will eventually attain a size of 4 feet (120 cm) tall and wide. Like all *Thuja*, it can be kept pruned to fit into a smaller space.

‘**Golden Tuffet**’ is a new cultivar for us. My understanding is that it originates from a sport of *T. o.* ‘Rheingold’ found at Iseli nursery in Boring, Oregon.

‘**Teddy**’ reminds me of a little bun of fine moss that is bright green in summer and bronze in winter. It retains its fine juvenile foliage and so far has retained its perfect globe shape without pruning. I expect that it will mature at about the same size as *T. o.* ‘**Linesville**.’ Overall, a great little plant.

‘**Sherwood Frost**’ is a slow-growing, narrowly columnar plant that has light creamy-white branch tips. In size and form it resembles ‘**Emerald**.’ This one would probably do well in a bit of light shade as an alternative to full sun.



Thuja orientalis

(now *Platycladus orientalis*)

Oriental arborvitae, Eastern tree of life

This species has undergone a name change and is now classified as the separate genus *Platycladus orientalis*. I am choosing to utilize the old name here only for the purpose of discussion alongside the other *Thuja* species.

Its principal distinguishing features are in the appearance of its cones and foliage as well as its almost scentless sap. Along with *Juniperus chinensis* and *Pinus tabulaeformis*, the Oriental arborvitae is one of three conifers most frequently cultivated in China. A number of cultivars are planted in the west, but its typical form is rarely seen outside of China.

Compared to *T. occidentalis*, Oriental arborvitae is better adapted to the south than to the northern latitudes. Native to China, Manchuria and Korea, it does not grow as large as *T. occidentalis* and requires less moisture. My main criticism of the species is the winter discoloration of many cultivars. That said, there are several that I consider first-class.

‘**Beverly Hills**’ is a superb compact pyramidal form that will mature to around 8 to 10 feet (2.5–3 m). The soft, fern-like foliage is a bright yellow-gold and retains its color throughout the year. The silver-white cones, produced at a young age, add to its beauty.

‘**Blue Cone**’ has a great upright oval (egg-shaped) form and, when pruned well, is quite full. The color and the cones have a bluish hue but this is not really a blue form.

‘**Morgan**’ is a plant we received from Larry Stanley (Stanley & Sons Nurs-

ery in Boring, Oregon) that I didn't think much about until the first winter. For us in the south, the juvenile leaves (fans) are pale green in the summer, and the plant is very tight. As winter approaches, the outer margins of the fans turn plum purple while the inner

Today, T. plicata is one of the most promoted coniferous trees for the South ... and has mostly replaced Leyland cypress in commercial plantings

margins retain the green color. This is a knockout plant and everyone who sees it wants it. It's on my Top 10 list of all small conifers!

'**Pyramidalis Aurea**' is similar in form to *T. occidentalis* 'Degroots Spire' but has bright golden-yellow leaves. I have been told that this may not be a legitimate name for the cultivar, but I have no other name in my records. This is a tough plant with beautiful twisted foliage that seems to like heat but would also be hardy in at least Zone 5. As with too many conifer cultivars, there is either a lack of information on the ultimate size or it is incorrect. My guess is that this cultivar will mature between 10 to 15 feet (3–4.5 m) tall with a three-foot (1-m) spread.

Thuja plicata **Western redcedar or** **giant western arborvitae**

As if one needed an excuse, it is worth a trip to the Pacific Northwest just to see

T. plicata growing in its native environment. In areas of high rainfall, *T. plicata* attains heights in excess of 200 feet (60 m). The tree has many uses – native Americans used it for totem poles and canoes, and the tough roots were used for fish hooks. It is also the principal source of wooden shingles.

The late J.C. Raulston recognized the potential for this tree in the south. Today, *T. plicata* is one of the most promoted coniferous trees for the South and, along with *Cryptomeria japonica*, has mostly replaced Leyland cypress in commercial plantings. Many nurserymen tell me that they can't keep up with the demand.

'**Canadian Gold**' has bright gold foliage that holds up well in our heat and humidity and does not burn in full sun.

'**Cuprea**' is a new plant for us this year and so far, hasn't been extremely happy in its new home. Upon seeing it for the first time at Iseli Nursery in Boring, Oregon, I was excited about this diminutive *Thuja* with a mixture of creamy-yellow and copper foliage. We are evaluating it in half-day sun, and I see this as a great plant in the three- to four-foot (90–120 cm) range to place along a mixed (deciduous and evergreen) border pathway.

'**Sunshine**' is my personal favorite of the golden-yellow forms. The foliage is very full and holds up well under summer heat. It is supposed to attain a height of 30 feet (9 m). Ours has only put on a couple of inches of new growth each year so, given its present height of only four feet (120 cm), I know I will only see a mature specimen in books or other gardens.

Thuja standishii Japanese arborvitae

This species is native to the mountains of Honshu and Shikoku in Japan, where it grows primarily in subalpine and cool temperate forest. This is one of the “Five Sacred Trees of Kiso,” a group that includes Hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), Sawara cypress (*C. pisifera*), elk horn cedar (*Thujopsis dolobrata*) and umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*). These valuable trees of the Kiso Forest were protected during feudal times from being cut by common people; they were only cut for the residences and temples of royalty and powerful families in the area. Cutting by commoners was punishable by death.

About five years ago, we received a wild-collected specimen that today is approximately 10 feet (3 m) tall and is one of the most beautiful specimens that I’ve seen. The limbs sweep down from the main trunk and then arc skyward. The foliage droops from the branches in a fashion reminiscent of a Bassett hound’s ears. The combined effect provides a surreal specimen. This spring we received a small cultivar named ‘Wakehurst’ that we are evaluating. At this stage, it’s too early to render an opinion.

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Thuja koraiensis Korean arborvitae

This species is very similar to *T. sutchuenensis* except that on *T. koraiensis*, the shoots bear scaly leaves and the undersides of the leaves are glaucous. The distribution of this species is the Korean peninsula along with a disjunct population that is confined to a section of the Changbai Mountains in China’s Jilin Province, where it is classified as “vulnerable” and is therefore protected. While the specimens that I’ve seen in northern arboreta are in the 10-foot (3-m) range, mature trees can reach 30 feet (9 m) in height in their native environment.

We are currently growing a cultivar ‘Glauca Prostrata,’ but I’m not certain this is a valid name. There are two specimens in the arboretum. One looks as

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though it will become a small shrub while the other has a growth habit similar in form to *Juniperus horizontalis* and is currently eight inches (20 cm) tall with a spread of around two feet (60 cm). Both are blue-green and have the characteristic silver undersides to the foliage. I am rather fond of the species but doubt it will ever be in the mainstream nursery business.

***Thuja sutchuenensis* Sichuan arborvitae**

As late as 1998, this species was listed as extinct in the wild but was rediscovered in 1999 by a regional team of botanists that were searching for endangered plants. The species name is derived from the area (formerly a part of eastern Sichuan Province) in central China where it was first discovered around 1892. Later in the twentieth century, a number of trips were launched to rediscover *T. sutchuenensis*. However, nothing was found, and it therefore remained known only from specimens last collected around 1900. As a result, the species was widely regarded as extinct in the wild. However, remnant wild populations were found on steep slopes and ridges of limestone formations where the soil is shallow.

In my travels, I don't recall seeing this species in any collection. Several years ago we received six rooted cuttings, of which all but one has died. It has struggled and soon will receive a new location in the arboretum in sharp soil of a higher pH. There are no cultivars, and I suspect this plant shall remain relegated to arboretum status or as a curiosity to the intrepid collector. Like the genus *Metasequoia*, it certainly has an interesting story of rediscovery.

Hybrid *Thuja*: 'Green Giant'

'Green Giant' was introduced in 1967 to the U.S. National Arboretum from Denmark and is supposedly a hybrid of *T. standishii* x *plicata*. It was named by Don Shadow after being mislabeled in the trade as *T. occidentalis* 'Giganteoides.'

It is a tall, fast-growing, upright evergreen tree with a tightly pyramidal to conical growth habit. The foliage remains a rich glossy green throughout the year in the South, and deer seem to leave it alone. Here at the arboretum, we have planted forty-eight 'Green Giants' for screening. This is one of the fastest growing trees that we grow and, once established, displays good drought tolerance.

Thuja is a very diverse genus with species and cultivars of every size, form, and color. There is literally a plant for every application and USDA Zone.

About the author: In 1990, Tom Cox and his wife, Evelyn, founded the Cox Arboretum in Canton, Georgia, which is now recognized as one of the largest private collections of woody plants in the southeast. Today they are growing over 600 different conifers covering 29 genera. Visit www.coxgardens.com for more information. ▲



Improving the Tree of Life: *Thuja occidentalis* from Seed

by Clark West

Even though many collectors of dwarf conifers are not particularly drawn to arborvitae cultivars, most will admit that arborvitae can add structure and character to a landscape. Still, nurserymen probably appreciate this genus more than a lot of Conifer Society members do.

My interest in arborvitae stems largely from the fact that they are easily raised from seed, the seedlings of cultivars can be variable, and the seed is readily available. They are also easy to transplant at any season, and my friends and relatives always seem happy to take my excess plants!

If seed propagation intrigues you, I suggest you take a look at *Thuja occidentalis* as a subject for experimentation. In my experience, the variability of seedlings of *Pinus* and *Picea* is not great, nor do their cultivars frequently have viable seed. The only real fun with pines and spruces for the person interested in developing new cultivars comes from witches' broom seedlings. While cultivars of *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (Lawson cypress), *C. obtusa* (Hinoki falsecypress), and to some extent *C. pisifera* (Japanese falsecypress) may produce seedlings of considerable variety, *C. lawsoniana* seeds are not easy to obtain, and *C. obtusa* cultivars do not grow well in my Midwest climate. As a result, I have developed a special interest in *Thuja occidentalis* seed and collect it – openly or surreptitiously – wherever I find it.

Second-generation payoff is possible

There are a number of *T. occidentalis* cultivars from which I have not yet grown any exciting seedlings, although I admit that I have not grown hundreds of any one variety. These include *T. o.* 'Pyrami-

*The fun begins when
a yellow seedling is
observed from a
green parent.*

dalis,' 'Pyramidalis Compacta,' 'Techny,' 'Wansdyke Silver,' 'Spiralis,' 'Little Champion,' and 'Pendula.' The seedlings have all looked like the parent plant. Seed batches from yellow cultivars such as *T. o.* 'Pumila Sudworth,' 'Watnong Gold,' and 'Sunkist' usually produce something short of 50% yellow seedlings, the exact fraction being difficult to determine because yellow seedlings have a high mortality. But almost invariably, the yellow seedlings end up looking like their yellow parent and the greens are of little interest. One or two seedlings from *T. o.* 'Hetz Midget' and 'Rosenthalii' grew rapidly and resembled generic arborvitae – that is, they had few characteristics to differentiate them from the species. As I will discuss shortly, "ugly ducklings" like these are also common with seedlings of *T. o.* 'Holmstrup,' but they may have further potential nonetheless.

The fun begins when a yellow seedling is observed from a green parent. In such cases, there's a good chance the plant will have characteristics that differ from existing cultivars, but there is no guarantee that it will win any beauty contests or that you will become the Luther Burbank of arborvitae.

Many years ago, two of about 20 plants I grew from 'Holmstrup' seed were yellow. ('Holmstrup' is one of my favorites; it is a slow-growing upright green cultivar with relatively fine, dense foliage and a compact, refined appearance. It competes favorably with *T. o.* 'Degroot's Spire' as one of the best, but 'Degroot's Spire' rarely sets seed.) One of my two yellow seedlings grew into an uninspiring generic yellow, but the other was apparently endowed with some good genes from its mother. It now displays thickly set, bright yellow foliage, but it grows slowly. Some of you may know it as the cultivar 'Gold Drop.' The original 'Gold Drop,' at age 14, still turns heads, as it stands about five feet (1.5 m) tall with foliage that is very yellow in summer and a striking orange in winter.

Seeds from 'Hetz Wintergreen' – a vigorous upright plant favored by nurs-

erymen because it usually keeps a single trunk – gave me my second yellow seedling from a green cultivar. My "yellow wintergreen" has grown at about one-quarter the rate of its green siblings and seems to differ from other yellows in that it is columnar, like its parent. Currently, it is three times taller than it is wide. It may turn out to be similar to 'Pumila Sudworth' or a more upright version of 'Sunkist' or 'Lutea' ('George Peabody'). Or it could develop into a striking, golden spire. Time will tell!

The third yellow plant I've grown from a green plant's seed is still in its early infancy and is described later in this article.

Where did the many *T. occidentalis* cultivars listed in the conifer reference books originate? From the descriptions, we can infer that most were developed by nurserymen who, in many cases over 100 years ago, spotted variants among perhaps hundreds of seedlings. To my knowledge, there is no record of the frequency with which cultivars produce variant seedlings. As noted above, many seem to have very stable genes and produce few if any variants, but I have found one which does have variable



Two yellow seedlings from a batch of seed from *T. occidentalis* 'Holmstrup,' a green cultivar. At age 10 months, the seedling on the right was already the more compact of the two and was subsequently named *T. o.* 'Gold Drop.'

progeny – *T. o.* ‘Hoseri.’

‘Hoseri’ is an upright green cultivar which was, for obscure reasons, popular in the Cincinnati area at one time and can still occasionally be seen in parks and cemeteries in the region. I find that a small percentage of its offspring will eventually grow into dense globes; however, they have not been superior to other globes such as ‘Hetz Midget’ in any discernable way. Another fraction of each seedling batch produces tall, narrow, conical plants with foliage more dense and attractive than that of the parent, but although these specimens are very symmetrical and have beautiful texture, they probably do not differ sufficiently from others with this form. A third ‘Hoseri’ seedling variant has as yet been characterized only as “fast,” since it has no special attribute except rapid growth. At the age of about four years, it has grown to six feet (1.8 m) and is putting on at least 30 inches (75 cm) this year. It is conical with an open habit and has finer foliage texture than that of the other rapid grower, the hybrid ‘Green Giant.’

As a final example of a second-generation seedling success, two seedlings from an old specimen labeled *T. o.* ‘Sherwood Plumespire,’ (which is probably the same as ‘Sherwood Column,’) developed identical juvenile foliage. Their habit is loose and open and their growth is slow. As they age, their foliage is taking on the adult arborvitae configuration but with more threadlike texture reminiscent of *T. o.* ‘Filiformis.’ These two are certainly conversation pieces!

Third-generation surprises

I have become interested in seeds of the so-called “ugly ducklings,” or generic

seedlings, mentioned above since each appears to carry some good genes from its attractive parent, and these may manifest as different forms in *their* seedlings. For example, I’ve found that between five and 50 percent of seedlings from the slow-growing ‘Holmstrup’ will be fast growing and lack the refined look of their parent. One resulting plant is conical and dense, becoming broader with age and looking nothing like ‘Holmstrup.’ Seeds sown from this plant, however, have produced slow-growing, perfect ovals with small, vertically-oriented foliage reminiscent of *T. orientalis* until age five to seven, when the shape begins to open up.

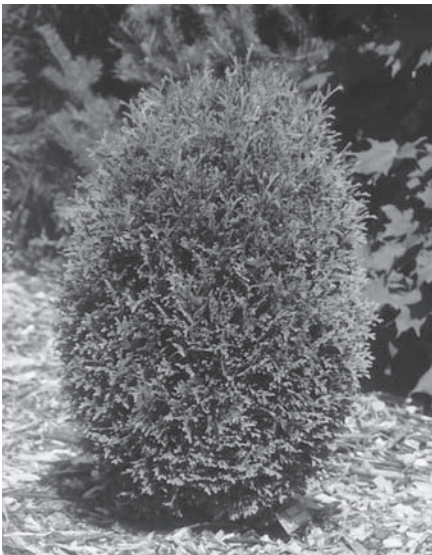
A second ‘Holmstrup’ seedling is spire-like with relatively large foliage and open growth; again, this third-generation offspring looks nothing like its compact parent. Seed is ripening on this plant as I write this, and I am hoping that some of the fourth-generation seedlings will display their aristocratic “blood”!

“Ugly ducklings” I have grown on from ‘Rosenthalii’ and ‘Hetz Midget’ have not yet reached seed-bearing age, so I can only dream about new cultivars from those lines.

A slightly different scenario is developing from another batch of third-generation seedlings. This story begins with a visit long ago to Chub Harper’s garden at a time when his *T. o.* ‘Filiformis,’ with its threadlike branches, had produced an abundance of seeds. He kindly let me collect some and, of the 10 or 15 seedlings, two looked like their parent. I have kept those but neither has produced seed yet. However, one of their generic-looking siblings did produce seed this year, and it is already apparent that

about 15% of these seedlings display the threadlike foliage of their grandparent, while others are atypical in various ways. Even better, one seedling is yellow. Will it be a yellow form of 'Fili-formis'? Stay tuned! This outcome differs from my experience with 'Holmstrup' described earlier, in that many of the third-generation seedlings here seem to be developing into perfect copies of their grandparent.

Like all gymnosperms, arborvitae depend on the wind to transport their pollen. Pollen release and the formation of receptive pollination droplets occur over a very short period of time for a given plant, and you will miss the event unless you make frequent rounds and know what you are looking for. The quantity of seed produced depends in part on the weather during that period. Whether all cultivars release and receive pollen during the same brief time period is unclear, but if they did and the wind was right, one would expect cross-pollination.



Yet in my experience, the seedlings do not display traits easily attributed to cultivars growing nearby. The variability appears to be the result of "selfing," or self-pollination.

Try this at home

Anyone can grow arborvitae from seed. The small cones turn brown when they are beginning to ripen, and seed dispersal occurs from mid-September to late October. I grow the seedlings in the basement under lights in the winter, after germinating the seeds on filter paper in petri dishes that are kept in Ziploc bags under lights. To minimize fungal growth, I moisten the filter paper with a suspension of one-half teaspoon each of Captan and Benomyl in one pint of water. A sprouting seed is transferred with tweezers to soilless mix in a 2-3/8-inch (6-cm) square plant band, and cotyledons emerge in about a week.

Using this method, 50 to 75 percent of the sprouted seeds survive to become seedlings; the lowest percentages result from old seed batches or those seeds which are the last to germinate within a particular batch. I fertilize with Osmocote once the second leaves appear and, to prevent buildup of salts, I use a partial-immersion technique to water each of the containers that holds 36 plant bands. Further, the damping off that affects spruce and other conifer seedlings has not been a problem for me. The survival rate seems to increase when I surround the seedlings with pans of water while indoors. During their first summer

An oval, dwarf *T. occidentalis* descended from tall, slow-growing *T. o.* 'Holmstrup.' Its current height is 27 inches (68 cm).

they are kept under 60% shade, and I plant them out the next spring. Any small or abnormal seedlings may be kept in the shade another year.

One could argue that this hobby is less rewarding than hybridizing roses or daylilies, but if you prefer conifers over those plants, which will be more satisfying? True hybridizing requires considerable planning and record keeping, but you only need patience and luck to develop new cultivars of arborvitae! ▲

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About the author: Dr. West resides on about an acre in Harrison, Ohio, a short distance west of Cincinnati. He has progressed over the years from growing roses to an interest in rock gardens to collecting conifers and, finally, propagating them. He is a long-standing member of the Conifer Society.

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Thuja Garden

An Oasis Along Maine's Rocky Coast

by Anne Brennan

During our last two vacations to Mount Desert Island in Maine, my husband Tony and I have visited a unique horticultural attraction that should be of particular interest to conifer lovers. Its combination of local history, native flora and landscape design have something to offer any traveler through the Pine Tree State.

The Thuja Garden and Thuja Lodge lie on a hillside in Northeast Harbor, Maine. The lodge was built as a summer residence by Joseph Henry Curtis in the late 1800s, and an orchard was maintained nearby. Upon his death in 1928, Mr. Curtis gave his 140-acre tract of land that included these features to the residents of Mount Desert Island. A trustee and landscape architect named Charles K. Savage renovated the lodge to function as a horticultural library, and where the orchard once stood, the Thuja Garden now grows.

While the large, semi-formal herbaceous garden designed by Mr. Savage probably attracts more visitors overall than the conifers do, a canopy of native *Thuja occidentalis* (northern whitecedar) surround the

smaller garden areas, and two small but well-maintained conifer beds combine cultivars' colors and textures as well as any public garden I've seen.

Since the property is also connected to a network of hiking trails, there are two inconspicuous side entrances in addition to the two ornate carved front gates depicting Maine's native flora and



Carved entrance gates greet visitors to the Thuja Garden in Northeast Harbor, Maine.



fauna. Intriguing as that was, we typically “hike” using four tires and a steering wheel, so we had two options. We could either walk up the scenic 1/4-mile Asticou Terrace Trail from the parking area below, stopping to rest at one of several lookouts, or we could drive the car up the single-lane, winding dirt road to the upper parking area, hoping we wouldn’t meet an SUV coming the other way. Sad but true, we decided to drive, rationalizing that we could then maximize our time in the gardens. So, I cannot give a first-hand account of the Terrace Trail feature until next time!

There are landscape and architectural features in the Thuya Garden to interest both plantspeople and what I call

the “lobster tourists.” Trails lead through fern-filled pockets, past a good-sized dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) complete with a sign encapsulating the species’ story of rediscovery, under the branches of old, multi-trunked *T. occidentalis*, and back to the green lawns and flower beds near Thuya Lodge. Benches and chairs invite frequent rest stops as visitors explore the views from various levels of the hilly terrain, and you may also peruse the old and rare books inside the two-story lodge-turned-library. So even on a rainy day, you won’t leave disappointed if a healthy dose of Maine’s native flora alongside a well-designed and walkable landscape is what you’re after. ▲



Above: The labeled conifer display beds, partially shown here, along with a semi-formal herbaceous garden add another dimension to the park-like setting of the Thuya Gardens.

Left: The trunk architecture of a large *Thuja occidentalis* is easily visible from one of the walking trails.

Dwarf Arborvitae in a Central Virginia Garden

by Maud Henne

In my Central Virginia garden, hardiness zone 6-7, heat zone 6-7, certain cultivars of *Thuja occidentalis*, *T. orientalis* and *T. plicata* have done very well.

The oldest plants in my collection are growing in my woodland and were planted in 1987 when the garden was started:

***T. orientalis* ‘Aurea Nana’** (also possibly known as ‘Bergman’s Golden’)



was developed by J. P. Bergman in Augusta, GA, in 1902, according to Krussmann’s *Manual of Cultivated Conifers*. In the 1990s, before I installed 8-foot netting all around the collection as well as chicken wire and Deer Away for this particular plant, it suffered many deer attacks. Since then, it has recovered and produced an attractive form with healthy foliage in green with a slight golden hue. At a height of three-and-a-half feet (1 m) and a diameter of two feet (60 cm), it is a nice size for its location but probably smaller than it would have been without the earlier setbacks.

***T. occidentalis* ‘Tiny Tim,’** with a present height just under three feet (90 cm), is also displaying nice green foliage.

***T. occidentalis* ‘Globosa Rhodiandra’** is growing from one of the cuttings that the late J.C. Raulston allowed Conifer Society meeting attendees to take in the late 1980s. My plant is less than two feet (60 cm) tall. This plant resembles ‘Tiny Tim’ in appearance but remains smaller.

Thuja occidentalis ‘Tiny Tim’
below *Chamaecyparis pisifera*
‘Filifera Aurea Nana’

Thuja occidentalis ‘**Minima**,’ also a cutting from the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, now measures 33 inches (84 cm).

Would I recommend these plants? The green globose forms are not spectacular, but they have proven to be very dependable. They accept excessive rain, drought, high humidity, high temperatures, and deer damage. They might show some signs of stress for a while, but they recover without any special treatment. Overall, they are pleasant to have around.

Several more cultivars that I acquired in the late 1990s are described below. Origin information is from Krussmann’s *Manual of Cultivated Conifers*, and the years I obtained them appear in parentheses:

T. occidentalis ‘**Hetz Midget**’ (1997 and 1998) – One plant is nine inches (23 cm) and the other is 19 inches (48 cm), but both are globose. This cultivar was introduced into the trade in 1942.

T. orientalis ‘**Wansdyke Silver**’ (1999) wasn’t doing well so I’ve dug it up and kept it in a container. H. J. Welch discovered and named the cultivar in 1962.

T. occidentalis ‘**Sunkist**’ (1999) – This golden splash of foliage is a great accent. It was developed before 1960 by Gebr. Boer in Boskoop, Holland.

T. plicata ‘**Cuprea**’ (1997) is a delightful plant with pale yellow tips that grows very slowly. It was developed

around 1930 in England.

To me, a plant layperson, a few cultivars in my collection are hardly recognizable as arborvitae. One of these is *T. occidentalis* ‘**Ericoides**,’ planted in 1997 and now 22 inches (56 cm) tall, because of its soft, heather-like foliage. Another is *T. orientalis* ‘**Ohlendorffii**’ (planted in 1990) with string-like juvenile foliage.

A plant with variegated foliage that I acquired under the name of *T. orientalis* ‘van Hoey Smith’ was bright green and yellow but does not seem to like my climate. It looks weak and sickly. I saw a mature specimen in the Trompenburg Arboretum in Rotterdam, Holland, during the Conifer Society’s tour in 2000. Dick van Hoey Smith laughed and said it flatters him that in the United States, *T. orientalis* ‘**Variegata**’ carries his name, but it is not an accepted botanical name. The story goes that cuttings from him got into this country and made the rounds through several nurseries, and one of the nurserymen, remembering only the source, used that as the description.

A plant sold as *T. occidentalis* ‘**Rheingold**,’ at times widely available here because of its bronze color, does not like my garden at all. Over the years, I’ve tried more than half a dozen of them without success. I seem not to have the “bronze thumb” for that plant!

All in all, when I am asked what will grow well in my corner of Central Virginia, *Thuja* always gets my recommendation. ▲

Thuja – a Few Favorites

by Charlene & Wade Harris

Many folks overlook the arborvitae as common and ordinary, but there are some extraordinary cultivars worth growing. Some of our favorites are the tall gold arborvitae, *Thuja occidentalis* ‘Aurea,’ ‘Lutea’ and ‘Sunkist.’ We’ve grown them all. As smaller trees they were multi-stemmed, but Wade began trimming away the side branches, and now each has a strong dominant main trunk.

Our home is located on a hill with about one-acre of sandy-gravel glacial till soil with clay veins. It is elevated 60 feet (18 m) above an acre of flat marshland and muck soil over clay and about a half-acre of oak-hickory woods. We have our *Thuja* planted in all of these settings and find them very adaptable.

In the spring of 1997, we moved three, five-foot (1.5-m) tall *T. occidentalis* ‘Lutea’ (George Peabody Arborvitae) from our Ann Arbor home to our current rural location 20 miles to the northwest. They currently form part of a barrier border along our south property line, where they grow in full sun. They are now 15 feet (4.5 m) tall and five to six feet (approx. 1.5 m) wide, and grow over one foot (30 cm) per year.

We have five *T. occidentalis* ‘Aurea’ growing in a bermed area in front of our house that range from 12 to 15 feet (3.5–4.5 m) tall and six feet (1.8 m) wide. Three of the five will be dug and relocated this fall. We’ve found *Thuja* to

be quite resilient to moving regardless of size due to their fibrous root systems.

Two *T. occidentalis* ‘Holmstrup’ are planted in a narrow bed in front of the house. They are wonderful narrow arrows at five feet (1.5 m) tall and only 16 inches (40 cm) wide, but they have outgrown the bed and will also be moved this fall.

We’ve found Thuja to be quite resilient to moving regardless of size due to their fibrous root systems.

Among our narrowest arborvitae is a 15-foot (4.5-m) tall and 32-inch (80-cm) wide *T. occidentalis* ‘Hood River Cemetery’ purchased as a one-gallon plant at a Conifer Society meeting auction. It is growing at about 12–14 inches (30–35 cm) per year as part of the south barrier border. We would like to know where this plant originated; if someone could tell us we’d be thankful. It is now a stately specimen rivaling our *T. occidentalis* ‘Malonyana’ but with denser foliage. It maintains this dark green color through all seasons and is a great complement to the gold ‘Lutea’ nearby.

Our three *T. orientalis* are six feet (1.8 m) tall and 32 inches (80 cm) wide, with lime green foliage arranged in flat

vertical fans. We will be transplanting them this fall.

A brace of *Thuja occidentalis* 'Malonyana' are planted on each side of our stairway leading down to the lake on an east-facing, somewhat dry hillside under a high canopy of oak and hickory. This Hungarian arborvitae is extremely narrow, very dark green, and maintains its color throughout the year in our climate. Purchased as five-foot (1.5-m) trees in 2001, they were root bound in under-sized containers. They are now nine feet (2.7 m) tall, 20 inches (50 cm) wide and grow about 15 inches (38 cm) per year. We hope to live long enough to see them reach the spectacular height of those pictured in *Conifers, The Illustrated Encyclopedia Vol. 2*.

Thuja occidentalis 'Wareana' has a unique creamy pale green color. It is a slow growing pyramidal tree half as wide as it is tall. Ours is four feet (1.2 m) tall and two feet (60 cm) wide and grows about six inches (15 cm) per year. It is also planted on a dry east-facing hillside under the oak-hickory canopy. About twenty feet away, *T. occidentalis* 'Sherwood Moss' has delightfully delicate light green foliage. It is five feet (1.5 m) tall and 30 inches (76 cm) wide, growing about six to eight inches (15–20 cm) per year.

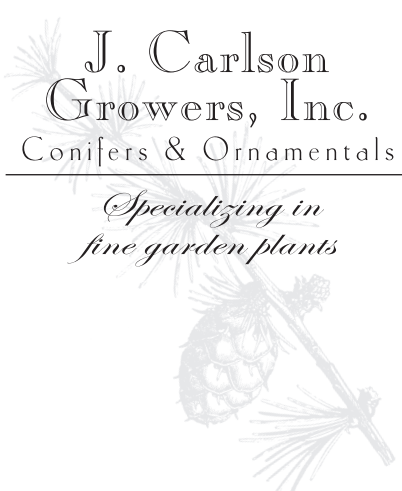
Down on the flat about 50 feet (15 m) from the lake, a weeping arborvitae, *T. occidentalis* 'Pendula' is growing slowly and forming a graceful waterfall. Wade staked it to its current height of nine feet (2.7 m) by 26 inches (66 cm) wide. It has a three-foot (0.9 m) skirt at

the base. The soil there is predominately muck and the ground water is two feet (60 cm) below the soil surface. Growing in the same muck 50 feet (15 m) away and 20 feet (6 m) from the lakeshore are two *T. standishii* x *plicata* 'Green Giant.' They were originally purchased by mail order from Forest Farms as 10-inch (25-cm) bare root plants, and now they are 16 feet (4.8 m) tall and five to six feet (approx. 1.5 m) wide at six years old.

This spring Wade cut down our *T. plicata* 'Zebrina.' It was 15 feet (4.5 m) tall and almost as wide. It has winter-

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burned so severely for the last four to five years that the new spring growth could not restore its appearance.

The last notable plant is our *T. occidentalis* 'Spiralis.' We love the foliage, which is reminiscent of *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Fernspray.' It is growing in a very hot dry site in sandy-rocky soil and looks quite lovely. It is almost seven feet (2 m) tall and 30 inches (76 cm) wide

and grew 16 inches (40 cm) this year.

Although we live in the heart of a large state recreational area and the deer are plentiful, so far none of our arborvitae have been browsed by deer. We also have several unique *Taxus* (yew), which have not yet suffered any deer damage.

Please send any information about *T. occidentalis* 'Hood River Cemetery' to charris@provide.net. ▲



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The above 3 pictures were taken at the National Arboretum in Washington D.C. in August of 2001. When planted in the fall of 1998, they were 3 feet tall and planted on 6 1/2 foot centers. They grew 3 feet in the first year (1999), and are now 10-12 feet tall. It can be trimmed to any height or width to create the ultimate natural or formal hedge.

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Grand Re-Opening of Benenson Ornamental Conifers

from the New York Botanical Garden

Largest landscape renovation in a decade to open amid Fall festivities

The New York Botanical Garden's Benenson Ornamental Conifers, known until recently as the Ornamental Conifer Collection, include some of the most interesting and exotic specimens of conifers in the country. They are located on 15 acres near the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden in the southernmost section of the Garden and will re-open to the public on Saturday, October 30, amid a weekend of festivities.

In its largest landscape restoration project in more than a decade, the Garden has undertaken extensive refurbishing to add new trees, improve the health of existing specimens, and enrich the visitor's experience. According to Dr. Kim Tripp, Senior Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections, "The Benenson Ornamental Conifers are unique; they include rare mature trees and equally rare cultivars of conifers from Europe that are no longer available in the trade."

The public opening will coincide with the fall

Members Open House. An official presentation will be made mid-afternoon Saturday and curators will lead hourly tours to introduce the public to this unique collection of rare trees. At the Garden's Rondina and LoFaro Gallery, a new exhibition opens. "Cultured Conifers: Selections of Rare Works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library" will display



Sara Cedar Miller / Courtesy of NYBG



Sara Cedar Miller / Courtesy of NYBG

botanical prints and books that illustrate the rich variety of conifers and their many uses. (See sidebar at right.)

New Trees, Irrigation System, Stone Pavilions

For the past three years, the Garden's Director of Living Collections and Senior Curator of Trees and Shrubs, Todd Forrest, has scoured nurseries, research fields, and plant collections from Connecticut to Oregon, searching for rare and beautiful specimens for the collection. Forrest's goal is to display as wide a range of cultivated conifers as possible: everything from the monkey puzzle tree and weeping giant sequoia to classic cultivated forms such as 'Silver Curls' fir and 'Blue Star' juniper. Approximately 250 new conifers have been added, including as-yet-unnamed dwarf white pines from the research nursery of legendary plantsman Sidney Waxman, professor emeritus at the University of Connecticut.

Another major undertaking involved bolstering the health of existing trees through systematic mulching, fertilizing, and remedial pruning to improve growing conditions and reinvigorate older plants. In addition, dense plantings were added to screen and absorb outside noise and the dramatic rock outcroppings in the landscape were cleared. Additional massive boulders have been positioned to create new beds for the display of dwarf conifers. A stone and wood pavilion, perched atop a rock outcrop, gives a dramatic new view over mature and newly planted conifers. Interpretative signs describing the history of the collection and its additions have been added

(continued on page 28)

Cultured Conifers: Selections of Rare Works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library

This Fall, conifers take center stage in "Cultured Conifers," an exhibition drawn from the collections of botanical illustrations and books in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library.

The exhibition will illuminate the diversity of conifers as well as the many roles of conifers in their natural habitats and in their uses by human beings, from culinary to medicinal, economic, landscape, and horticultural. It will be on display in the William D. Rondina and Giovanni Foroni LoFaro Gallery from October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005.

Cultured Conifers is organized around several themes. One grouping shows works that clarify the characteristics of conifers, of what makes a conifer a "conifer." A second grouping shows conifers in their ecosystems and the interactions with other living things that are dependent on conifers. For example, the rufus hummingbird, which was discovered by Captain Cook, lives in a coniferous forest when it migrates to Alaska. A third group focuses on superlatives, the coniferous world's own book of records. The most massive, the tallest, and the oldest trees in the world are all conifers.

(continued on page 29)

and new tram and pedestrian paths installed to improve access.

The natural beauty of the area is enhanced by new bluestone paving inside the gateway plaza and pavilions. Illumination of the collection's entrance and plaza enables this area to be used for special events at night. Finally, to facilitate the future care of the collection, a new irrigation system was introduced, drainage systems upgraded, and additional power sources installed.

Trees Both Ancient and Current

Conifers are an ancient group of plants that evolved over the last 300 million years into more than 600 different species. Many are treasured as ornamentals around the world. In 35 years of world travel, a famous collector, Colonel Robert H. Montgomery, amassed a collection of indigenous and exotic conifers for his estate in Cos Cob, Connecticut. He began donating specimens to The New York Botanical Garden in the 1930s and '40s. This is the only known comprehensive set of dwarf and specialty conifers from R. H. Montgomery.

About 50 years ago, renowned landscape architect Marian Cruger Coffin, who designed the Winterthur Museum grounds in Delaware, was retained to arrange the conifers artfully in the Garden. The collection was dedicated on May 26, 1949, with the planting of a dwarf Colorado spruce donated to the Garden by Colonel Montgomery and named for him (*Picea pungens* 'R.H. Montgomery'). It still stands today.

The Benenson Ornamental Conifers consist of approximately 440 conifers, including 70 donated by Montgomery. They complement the pine, fir, and

spruce collections in the Ross Conifer Arboretum near the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory.

Benenson Ornamental Conifer specimens range in size from 5 to 85 feet (1.5–25 m) tall. Highlights include an 'R. H. Montgomery' dwarf blue spruce that is nearly 100 years old and the parent of all such plants that are now in the nursery trade; a group of prehistoric dawn redwoods from China, a species thought to be extinct until they were re-discovered in a remote Chinese valley in the 1940s; and a rare reproducing pair of Japanese torreya, which are highly endangered in the wild. Echoing the 1949 dedication, the opening ceremony launching the restoration of the collection in 2001 was also marked by the planting of a blue conifer, a blue Arizona cypress (*Cupressus glabra* 'Blue Ice').

Patrick Chassé of Landscape Design Associates, Bar Harbor, Maine, researched the historic design and architectural elements for the restoration. The landscape architects were Shavaun Towers and Joe Payne of Towers/Golde, New Haven, Connecticut, and the civil engineer Frank Vultaggio of Wohl & O'Mara, Staten Island, New York. Yonkers Contracting Company, Inc., provided boulders used in the creation of the new dwarf conifer beds.

The restoration of the Benenson Ornamental Conifers was made possible by Mr. and Mrs. James Benenson, Jr.

The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road in the Bronx. For information call 718. 817. 8700 or visit our Web site at www.nybg.org. ▲

Courtesy of NYBG



(continued from page 27)

Another theme is the role of conifers in history. The exhibition includes a royal decree by the Queen of England in 1710, proclaiming that all “white and other pine-trees growing in Her Majesties Colonies” belonged to the crown, for the purpose of “the masting of Her Majesties Navy.”

Cultured Conifers includes examples of many other uses of conifers. Early illustrations of forest management show how resin was extracted from balsam firs and how charcoal was produced from conifer wood. A lithograph of *Pinus pinea* L. illustrates the source of pine nuts for culinary use. Illustrations of the horticultural use of conifers include grand vistas of formal parterres and estate gardens.

The Mertz Library, established in 1899, houses one of the world’s most important plant science research collections of published and archival documents tracing the development of botany and horticulture from the 12th century to the present. “Cultured Conifers” is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free with Garden admission. Exhibitions in the Mertz Library are made possible by the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, William D. Rondina and the Carlisle Collection, and The Kurt Berliner Foundation.

Courtesy of NYBG



Top: “*Picea bracteata*,” now named “*Abies bracteata*.” Hand-colored lithograph by William Richardson.

Bottom: “*Pinus spectabilis*,” now named “*Abies webbiana*.” Hand-colored engraving by James Sowerby (1757-1822).



C-o-n-i-f-e-r Word Game Winner Announced

In the last episode (Winter 2004), you found the Conifer Detective trying to “find my own roots” – the reasons I became a plant problem-solver. Then in the Summer issue, I invited you to play along and send in your own sentences using the letters c-o-n-i-f-e-r to begin the words.

Here’s what happened next.

I had just solved a small case for my secretary and I was staring out the window. It was quiet and there was no breeze. Not a needle was moving. Good time for a nap.

Just as I was about to blink for the last time, the computer chirped *bink!* – a message in the inbox.

The note from Conifer Society member **Dennis Groh** contained these four lines:

Coniferites ogling needles ignore
forlorn essential rootstocks.

Cones or needles initiate fresh
exuded resin.

Conifers offer naturalistic influences
for exceptional results.

Consideration of nomenclature
improves fun, evades ruin.

Nothing else was written. Were these clues? Random statements or facts?

Days went by with nothing more. The summer came and went. It was a very busy time and I temporarily forgot my search for the meaning of *conifer*. Labor Day was coming up; so were the colchicums. Leaf season is just around the corner.

The rainy days here are few and far between at this time of year. Mail began to stack up. E-mails, too.

One morning in late August a rare rain event occurred. I had time to check the mail. Lots of catalogs; lots of conifers for sale.

The computer chirped again – *bink!* I looked up and 5 more acronyms stared back at me.

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Here were more good clues to help me solve the case, and I felt good about it. The rain continued. I was happy about that, too.

Then the rain stopped. Looking up through the conifers, I could see blue sky. I could hear the birds singing. The sun was warm. Like discovering a witch's broom, a euphoric feeling overcame me. The world felt like a Hallmark card.

I checked my e-mail before I went home. Another one! **Rick Haase** wrote that "Conifers only naturally inspire frequent excellent remarks."

It's true. That's why so many of us appreciate conifers and why we just

love to talk about 'em! No wonder members seem to Congregate openly, noticing in forests evergreen residents. We are a happy bunch.

Conclusion: The word "conifer," and the plants themselves, can mean many things to many people. The possibilities seem as endless as the seedlings from a witch's broom.

I'm glad that fellow Conifer Society members could help solve the mystery by continually offering numerous insights for (my) evergreen roots, and having some fun in the process. That's what the society is all about.

Case closed.

As promised, the winner of the *Pinus bungeana* 'Rowe Arboretum' was selected from those who submitted sentences built from the word "conifer." It was tough to choose, but Rick Haase has been selected to receive the prize. ▲

About the author: Chris Daeger is manager of Rowe Arboretum in Indian Hill, Ohio. He enjoys writing in the style of the old-time radio detective programs.

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Marvin Snyder Recognized for Dedicated Support

The Merit Award for Dedicated Support of the Conifer Society recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the Conifer Society through their service, enthusiasm, commitment and promotion of membership in the Society. Also, this award acknowledges those who have been deeply involved in the activities of the Conifer Society, organizationally or otherwise.

For his long and valuable volunteer service, we recognize with this merit award Marvin Snyder. And Emelie, without your significant assistance, involvement and support, I am quite certain Marvin wouldn't be getting this award.

Marvin Snyder has clearly established himself as the role model of volunteer service to the Conifer Society. He joined the Conifer Society in the early 1990's and attended his first regional meeting in 1994. During that meeting,

Chub Harper asked for volunteers; Marvin stepped forward and since then he has not stepped back or sat down until this 2004 National meeting.

Actually, in 1994 Chub was asking for individuals to be State Representatives and Marvin said he would be the Representative for Kansas, but only if he could also include western Missouri, because Marvin knew there was a pocket of potential new members in that area. Marvin was then approached to run for the Board of Directors. He did and was elected to the Board in 1995. In that same year, Marvin wrote his first article for the then-ACS *Bulletin*.

Once on the Board, Marvin agreed to serve as the National Secretary and was elected by the Board. Marvin was elected to National Secretary a total of four times and served with three different Conifer Society Presidents. Marvin agreed to serve as president and was elected by the Board

as the 10th President of the Conifer Society. Marvin served as President for three years (1999-2001). He then served as

(continued on page 34)

Marvin and Emelie Snyder accept the Award of Merit from outgoing national president, Dennis Groh.



Award for Development in the Field of Conifers Presented to J.R.P. van Hoey Smith

The criteria for The Merit Award for Development in the Field of Conifers include the collecting and displaying of conifers, willingness to share knowledge of plants, and enthusiasm and drive to discover and develop noteworthy cultivars. Also taken into consideration are published articles, books or texts as well as new or improved propagation techniques and designs for the use of conifers.

Thanks, Don Howse; you and your committee of former Merit Award winners do an outstanding job every year behind the scenes. The Conifer Society appreciates your volunteer leadership. This year, the Award is a laser engraved item made from incense cedar and alder wood.

As the President of the Conifer Society, I have the privilege to announce that the winner of this award for 2004 is J.R.P. van Hoey Smith. And Riet, your patience and support for Dick over many years contributed to his ability to earn this award.

Dick van Hoey Smith, from his home in the Netherlands, has shared his contagious enthusiasm for plants with the world for many years. If you review his publications and plant collections, it

is easy to see his love of plants extends to both herbaceous (succulents and hostas) and woody plants (oaks, beeches, maples, hollies, rhododendrons and conifers). Of course, our Society is recognizing his impressive efforts in the area of conifers with our award today.

Dick is fond of quoting sayings at the appropriate moment and a few of his favorites are:

“If you want something done, give it to a busy man.”



Newly-elected national president Don Wild presents the Award of Merit to J.R.P. van Hoey Smith during the Dutch Conifer Society's visit to the U.S. in August.

“The more you know, the more you realize how little you know.”

“If you want to keep a plant, give it away.”

(continued from page 32)

past-president for two additional years so he could continue to share his wisdom and experience with the Board and ensure an orderly transition of office.

In summary, Marvin Snyder has made a significant and selfless contribution of his personal time, energy and tal-

Marvin's nine consecutive years as an officer easily make him our Society's longest serving officer.

ent to the Conifer Society for 10 consecutive years, which I am certain would not have been possible without Emelie's support and patience. When you consider that the Society was only founded 21 years ago, it becomes even clearer just how significant a contributor Marvin has been to this organization. Marvin's nine consecutive years as an officer easily make him our Society's longest serving officer.

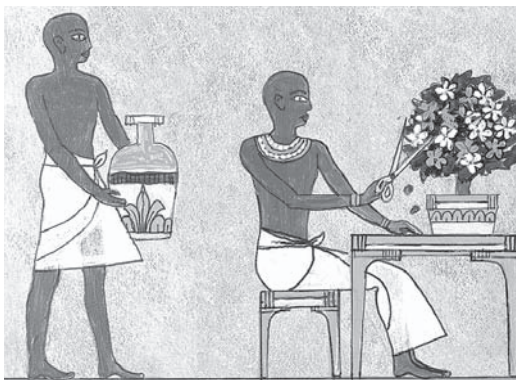
During his time of service, the Society

has grown in size and reputation. Marvin hired two editors and an office manager and encouraged improvements and innovation in the *Conifer Quarterly* and the National Office. He has documented the Policies and Procedures of the Board, a time-consuming but essential effort to support proper Board operation. Marvin has championed the Web site and Conifer Database development work of Bill Barger. Marvin also championed the 20-year indexing of all the articles in the *Bulletin* and the *Conifer Quarterly*.


On behalf of the Merit Award Committee chaired by Don House; the Officers; the Board; and the membership; please accept this award and our sincere thanks for all you have done and for the sacrifices that you and Emelie have both made. Congratulations, Marvin.

In recognition of their significant contributions and sacrifices over many years, the Conifer Society Board of Directors voted to rename this Award to be called the Marvin and Emelie Snyder Merit Award.

– *Dennis Groh, from the award presentation at the national meeting in Ohio.*



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(continued from page 33)

These sayings offer some insight into Dick's life long efforts.

Dick has been interested in plants since he was a young boy and still cherishes the succulent his grandmother gave to him well over 70 years ago. Circumstances caused Dick to become a ship broker/owner who was still able to maintain an avocation for plants; however, the avocation eventually got out of control. Since then, Dick has been a very busy man, traveling around the world in an effort to know more. He has been collecting, preserving, developing, documenting, and photographing. During this time Dick has been generous with his growing knowledge, his photographs and his plants.

"Every cloud has a silver lining." When Dutch elm disease required the removal of approximately 400 elms from the Rotterdam family estate in the 1920's, an opportunity arose for a new diversity of plantings by the van Hoey Smith family in what would eventually become the world famous Trompenburg Arboretum. The plantings included a

new pinetum, which has over time been substantially expanded by Dick into an aesthetically pleasing, well-labeled public collection of conifers from around the globe.

The International Dendrology Society recognized this arboretum, which has been nurtured by five generations of the van Hoey Smith family, in 1983 for its plant collections and its conservation and distribution of rare and endangered plants. Dick has also been recognized for his efforts. He was awarded the Silver Doorenbos Medal in 1981 by the Dutch Dendrology Society and the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal in 1984 by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Dick has authored or co-authored at least nine major books during the period 1986-2003, and of those, four were on conifers. The 1996 publication, *Conifers: The Illustrated Encyclopedia*, was an especially significant work. The two-volume set provided conifer information not readily found elsewhere. It was extensive in its coverage of conifers, introduced equivalent hardness maps for Europe, China and North America, and provided excellent color photographic documentation of species and cultivars.

Dick was responsible for most of the conifer photographs in the encyclopedia, as plant photography has also become a passion of his. During his travels around the globe taking pictures, his wife Riet has ably assisted Dick. She carefully records in a notebook key documentation supporting each photo. Riet also helps Dick as they carefully hand mount each photographic image between glass to ensure a high quality, long-life slide. Dick has carefully cataloged the slide library in a logbook,

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Iseli Grant Recipient Announced

Illinois Central College Arboretum in East Peoria, Illinois, has been selected to receive the 2004 Jean Iseli Memorial Grant.

According to Glenn Herold, professor at Illinois Central College:

“The money received from the Iseli Award will be used to update and complete the labeling for our collection of nearly 300 conifer taxa, and for the development and printing of interpretive brochures for this collection. I have been approved for a sabbatical in the spring of 2005 and intend to make this project one of my main accomplishment tasks.

“The arboretum is being used extensively, not just by students, but by area garden clubs, plant societies, and the public as a whole. The Jean Iseli Award will go a long way toward making the gardens a showplace for conifers in Central Illinois.”

The Conifer Society, which supports the development, conservation and propagation of conifers with an emphasis on dwarf or unusual varieties, awards a \$1,000 grant to a public garden, arboretum or horticultural institution. The award was established in 1986 in honor of the memory of plantsman Jean Iseli of Boring, Oregon. Jean Iseli was an ACS Founder and conifer propagator.

which has grown since 1955 to well over 60,000 slide entries. These properly documented slides serve an important educational purpose to provide correctly identified plant images for many publications. Dick also uses them when he lectures.

Dick has contributed several articles to the *ACS Bulletin* and *Conifer Society Quarterly* over the years. In fact, his photographs have been used in articles and featured on the publications' covers. Dick also was the driving force behind the recent Conifer Society tour to Germany and the Netherlands.

We are all fortunate that Dutch elm disease caused this marvelous chain of events, which gave us the fruits of labor from a busy, knowledgeable, and generous plant lover's life. Thank you, Dick.

– *Don Wild, from the award presentation during the Dutch Conifer Society's visit to Oregon.*



Courtesy of Dennis Groh

Dennis Groh and J.R.P. van Hoey Smith at the Trompenburg Arboretum.

Conifers in the News: **The Angel of Hidden Lake Gardens**

Pareidolia is the psychological term for the mind's ability to perceive meaningful patterns and shapes in something that is otherwise meaningless. The Man in the Moon is a classic example. Probably no plant inspires pareidolic experiences quite like the weeping Norway spruce. Recently we were enjoying a tour of Ridge Goodwin's nursery when I spotted a weeping spruce that – from a certain angle – looked to me exactly like a gigantic praying mantis poised to strike. From other angles it didn't look like anything in particular.

A decidedly more dramatically-shaped weeping spruce was featured in an article in Michigan State University's *State News*. The spruce resides on a hilltop at Hidden Lake Gardens, which is owned by the University. (The garden is in Tipton about 70 miles south of MSU's main campus and was the beneficiary of over 500 conifers donated by Chub Harper in 1981.) The weeping spruce has been christened by Chub as "The Angel of Hidden Lake Gardens." Chub started calling it the "angel" following an experience he shared with Dennis Groh on the solemn occasion when they gathered to scatter the ashes of Chub's wife Anna (who died in April) at the base of her favorite tree, another form of weeping spruce in the same garden. Dennis reported feeling a tap on his shoulder and, upon turn-

ing around, perceived the spruce as being transformed into an angel with wings and a halo.

Dennis believes that the vision may have been a sign from Anna Harper, who had a special gift for identifying shapes in the trees. For example, Chub reported that Anna could see an elephant complete with ears and a trunk in her favorite weeping spruce. If Anna were trying to reach across, what better way than for her to inspire the vision of an angel, who, as Chub believes, now stands guard over Hidden Lake.

– Tony Green



Dennis Groh

All Eyes on Ohio

National meeting breaks attendance record

by **Bill Barger**

This year's national meeting in Newark, Ohio, was different from past meetings in more ways than one. On a personal note, my wife, Suzanne, attended the meeting with me. This was her first and I thought that perhaps we could write something together including each of our perspectives. So I asked what she re-

membered and she replied, "Blah blah blah ... You bought a daylily at the conifer auction ... blah blah blah." Needless to say, she does not quite share my passion for conifers!

On Wednesday we arrived with our guests from England in tow. Lynne Rutter and Stephen Grubb attended the meeting in Portland, Oregon, five years ago and we became friends. They came to Ohio this year both to visit with my family and to attend the national meeting. Stephen is a founding member of the British Conifer Society and their current Treasurer.

The events began on Thursday

The Dawes Arboretum graciously hosted the national meeting, where attendees got a close look at the recently expanded conifer collection.



Photos by Dennis Groh except where noted.



Larry Stanley

evening with registration. This is possibly my favorite part of the meeting, seeing friends I had not seen for a year or more. While we were all catching up, we roamed around the room drooling over all the gems showing up for the auctions. Over 400 plants came in with very few duplicates. Plants varied from miniature junipers to large pines to one daylily (now part of my collection).

During the evening, Larry Stanley gave a presentation about new conifer cultivars that included many of the plants that were going to be in the next night's auction, further building the anticipation. Several other members presented Conifer Sketches (short presentations about a conifer-related topic) that continued through the evening.

On Friday morning after a quick breakfast and meeting officiated by new national president Don Wild, everyone boarded the buses to spend the day at Dawes Arboretum where many tours and demos were scheduled. I stayed behind to meet with state plant inspectors to insure that we were doing everything possible to insure that our auction would not cause any harm by spreading pests. The



Meeting co-chairs Rich Larson (left) and Bill Barger.

Inspector arrived, proceeded with the inspection, and gave all of the plants a clean bill of health. To top it off, he was so taken with the diversity of plant material that he asked for a membership form.

Once I arrived at Dawes and caught up with the rest of the group, I could not believe how much the Conifer Collection has changed over the past few years. I live within 100 miles of Dawes so I get to see it fairly regularly. Rich Larson, Jeff Bowman and the rest of the staff at Dawes had done a remarkable job of making the Conifer Collection "world class." The beds were all mulched with pine needles and I cannot remember seeing a single plant that was not clearly identified. I saw Ed Haselkus conducting a walking tour of the conifer collection, a large group of members following him and jockeying for the best place to hear his every word. Strolling to the opposite side of the stream, I saw a group watching a demo



Ann and Ted Schnormeier have created a garden where everyone could find a place to relax and reflect.

about the Digital Mapping System that Dawes uses to keep records of its plant locations. There were also tours of the propagation house.

Shortly after lunch, we left for Cherry Valley Lodge and the Keynote speakers' presentations – Dave Shetlar on insect pests and Jim Chatfield on fungus. I actually won a prize during Dave's presentation. He asked who knew what phrenology is (the study of outline of skull giving supposed indication of mental ability and characteristics.). I actually knew the answer, but only because it was

the punch line in a joke. Both presentations were very informative, and Dave Shetlar's presentation is available online at <http://bugs.osu.edu/~bugdoc/>. The rest of the night was dedicated to the banquet, Merit Award presentations, and plant auctions. In all over \$20,000 was raised at the auctions, a new auction record. Thank you to all that participated!

Saturday morning we again had breakfast and a short meeting. Then we were off to the day's events. Two buses went to the home of Russ and Donna Fling and two went to the home of Ted and Ann Schnormeier.

The Flings have created a wonderful private garden that any collector would be proud to have. They had done a fantastic job of creating varying views and "rooms." My visit there was a visit of discovery. Everywhere I turned there was something new to look at. I had an opportunity to visit Russ a few weeks prior to the meeting and I was



Above: Dr. Ed Hasselkus (left) and Dr. Harrison Flint were honored during the dedication of Educators Grove at the Dawes Arboretum.

Right: The Schnormeiers' garden featured lakes and sculptures designed around an Oriental theme.



amazed to learn how much I had missed the first time. All the plants were clearly marked and tastefully presented and in some cases they had tried to optimize growing conditions to insure that the specimens would thrive.

Next we were off to the home of Ted and Ann Schnormeier. The couple's garden is not a collection garden, but rather it was created to enhance peace, harmony, and serenity. Everywhere there was the soothing sound of running water. The gardens covered fifty acres with ten lakes and several intimate gardens. The home was adjacent to the largest of the lakes. Additionally there were several oriental themed buildings that were peaceful and serene. Many members found places to sit at the buildings and enjoy the scenery. Sculptures had been installed at several locations around the property as well. There were plenty of conifers, too. Most of the plants were clearly marked. While not intended to be a collector's garden there was a good collection there to enjoy.

Lunch was hosted at the Schnormeier's home, where I especially enjoyed a copy of a journal that Ted had prepared and left on the tables for us to read. In it they had documented events about the gardens. I was only able to read a small portion in the time we had but I thoroughly enjoyed it. I would encourage everyone to create a journal when they begin to develop a garden and maintain it as the garden evolves.

That evening we returned to Dawes for a barbeque. Before dinner, we were invited to a dedication ceremony for Educators Grove just behind the Visitor's

Center at Dawes. Both Dr. Harrison Flint and Dr. Ed Hasselkus were present and honored at the dedication. During the barbeque, we all had an opportunity to visit with both our old friends and our new friends one last time before we said goodbye for another year.

All in all the 2004 National Meeting was a great success with record attendance, record auction proceeds, a great hotel, great tour destinations, and wonderful people. By the way, my wife did admit that she had a fantastic time and that she is already looking toward the next meeting. I hope she will consider bidding on a conifer next time.

Finally there are some people that need to be recognized. Rich Larson and I were co-chairs of the event, which meant we had the responsibility for making the meeting a success. We could not have done this without the help of the volunteers. Terri Park was the Volunteer Coordinator, and I don't ever remember having such a great group of volunteers, including the staff at Dawes. Without your help we could not have had such a great event.

John Martin deserves a mention as well. John is the Conifer Society National Office and he handles the sales once the auctions are completed, often missing the dinner while the rest of us feast. Larry Stanley and Don Howse were the auctioneers and, as always, kept things moving along and entertaining. Thanks to all who planned, volunteered and attended. See you again next year! ▲

Dutch Conifer Society Tours West Coast

By Don Howse

Like the refreshing summer breeze I feel as I write this, 25 members of the Dutch Conifer Society blew through our region during the second week of August. And like the sunshine, their intensity and warmth energized those of us who were fortunate to travel with them. Most of the visitors were from the Netherlands, but Germany and Austria were also represented.

After landing in Seattle, on Wednesday, August 11th, the group was met by Dianne Fincham of Coenosium Gardens in Eatonville. They boarded a bus and visited South Seattle Community College where Bob Fincham greeted them. After a box lunch in the arboretum's gazebo, they toured the arboretum and its main point of interest, the Coenosium Rock Garden, which contains over 400 dwarf conifers. This one-third-acre garden has been donated by Dianne and Bob Fincham. In the evening, Dianne and a friend cooked and served a four-course dinner at the group's Eatonville motel.

The next day, the guests visited Coenosium Gardens, which the Finchams have developed into quite an amazing site since moving there eight years ago. Our national president Don Wild and his wife, Harriet, spent the day with the group, as did immediate past-president Dennis Groh and his wife, Carole. At the Roxy Theater in Eatonville, Bob presented his digital photographic presentation about the history of American conifer collecting, and then the European travelers enjoyed lunch and a garden tour back at the nursery. In the evening everyone was treated to a taste of the Old West with grilled hot dogs and hamburgers prepared over a wood fire. Dessert included toasted marshmallows, some of which were eaten with a knife and fork! Later in the evening, some of the Dutchmen visited a local tavern where one of them even sang with the band.

Friday the tour boarded the coach and traveled south along Interstate 5. The



Photos by Dennis Groh

Wilds and the Grohs went on ahead in their own vehicle to the first planned stop at Collector's Nursery in Battle Ground, Washington. Meanwhile, the coach passengers persuaded their driver, Donald, to make a detour around Mt. St. Helens, thinking it would only take an hour or so. In fact, the detour added nearly five hours to the expected two-hour trip. As Don and Dennis waited anxiously with Diana Reeck and Bill Janssen of Collector's Nursery, they became concerned and contacted the Washington State Police to ask about any possible mishaps along the highway. Because of the remoteness of the area, the coach was without phone contact until late in the afternoon. When they finally arrived at Collector's Nursery at about five o'clock in the afternoon, they enthusiastically described their wonderful drive through the scenic Mt. St. Helens Volcanic National Monument.

Despite their late arrival, they enjoyed a pleasant visit to the beautiful, conifer-filled gardens at Collector's Nursery before departing for the Resort at the Mountain in Welches, Oregon (also the site of the Conifer Society's 1999 National Meeting). A buffet dinner at the hotel capped off a long day.

On Saturday, the group traveled to Iseli Nursery in Boring, Oregon. The staff, led by Greg Pilcher, Jock Demme, and Paul Halladin, greeted them and led them to the gardens surrounding the office building. The gardens are extensive and well manicured, and the plants are clearly identified. Hugh Ferrar proudly showed the recently-installed rock gar-

den and scree that he had helped to create. Many miniature and dwarf conifers are displayed in this area.

Joe Harris conducted a bonsai demonstration for the visitors, using a *Pinus parviflora*. The membership of the Western Region of the Conifer Society was also invited to attend, and 108 members and guests gladly accepted the invitation. The gardens were impeccably maintained and a real treat to see. Iseli Nursery provided a western-style barbe-



Don Howse (left) with Dick van Hoey Smith.

cue, and we all piled our plates high for a delectable lunch under a shady tent.

After lunch, national president Don Wild presented the Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Garden Conifers to Dick van Hoey Smith of the Netherlands. A roaring cheer arose from the crowd at the announcement, as we all knew that the winner is most deserving. Speeches and gratuities followed. During the afternoon we boarded the nursery's vans for tours of the facilities, and everyone seemed to enjoy the day.

Sunday morning, August 15, our visitors boarded the coach early for the

two-hour trek to Gaston, Oregon, to visit Buchholz Nursery. Rita Oster and I served as bus hosts and pointed out interesting features along the way, including many native trees and other plants. Our Dutch visitors learned a thing or two about Oregon history as well.

Talon Buchholz and his staff greeted us warmly at the nursery and led us on a tour of the gardens and facilities. The plants on display at Buchholz Nursery are extremely well presented. Talon's wife, Haruko, and their daughter joined us for a wonderful lunch in the pavilion adjoining his irrigation pond.

Next, Talon joined us on the coach and we went to the City of Forest Grove, where very old and large specimens of *Sequoiadendron giganteum* grow. We also observed similar plants in front of the Catholic Church in the tiny Dutch community of Verboort, Oregon. Later, the coach took us to Washington Park the famous Japanese Gardens in Portland for guided tours.

Breakfast was served Monday morning in the garden pavilion at Porterhowse Farms, followed by tours of the gardens and arboretum. I was very proud to show off my collection of conifers and other plants to this distinguished group. We boarded the coach and headed out for a day of sightseeing that included the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area, with stops at Multnomah

Falls (600+ feet high), and the Bonneville Dam Fish Hatchery (with large specimens of Salmon, Trout, and Sturgeon in display ponds). We noted changes in the native forest habitat as we drove into more arid regions.

We saw wind surfers on the river as we headed up into the Hood River Valley, a well-known area of fruit orchards. We stopped during the hot afternoon at a fruit stand for refreshments and to purchase some of the local fruit. At the head of the valley is the snow covered Mt. Hood, which we encircled during our travels that day. We again noted the changing forest, and the many conifer species found in the Mt. Hood National Forest. On the southeast side of the mountain, we visited Trillium Lake, which offered great photo opportunities as well a chance to peruse the forest floor for notable native plants. We then followed the road to Timberline Lodge where we could hike on alpine trails, observe wildflowers, relax at the lodge, or visit remnant groves of *Pinus albicaulis* (whitebark pine), *Abies procera* (noble fir), *Picea engelmannii* (Engelmann spruce) and *Tsuga mertensiana* (moun-



Talon Buchholz (left) stands with Riet and Dick van Hoey Smith.

tain hemlock) at timberline.

We completed our day-long tour around the mountain with a fine dinner at the Rendezvous Grill in Welches, where we were joined by Don and Harriet Wild, Dennis and Carole Groh, Rita and Randy Oster, Bill Caldwell of Texas, and Lloyd Porter. The Grohs and Wilds bid us farewell, as they were flying home to Michigan in the morning. Our guests from Holland were in a festive mood and even broke into song later in the evening.

Tuesday morning, after breakfast at the hotel, we boarded the coach and drove south to Silverton, Oregon, to visit the Oregon Garden. Head gardener Al Shay and his team, including new Conifer Society member Sue Irick, greeted us warmly and led us on a tour of the gardens that focused on the conifer collection. Larry Stanley then hosted us to a nice lunch on the patio at the visitor's center. The Oregon Garden is relatively new, having been conceived by the members of the Oregon Association of Nurseries and built by their efforts and will. In four short years, it is already an amazing display of plant material and related art.

The coach then carried us to Larry Stanley's nursery, Stanley & Sons, in Boring, Oregon. We were greeted by Larry, his wife Marlene, their son and daughter Steven and Tara, plus other friends and staff. Larry led a tour of his remarkable gardens and conifer collection, entertaining us with his humor all along the way. When we returned to our starting point, we found tables on the lawn set with colorful cloths and dinnerware, wait staff prepared to serve us, Larry's brother Jim behind a bar serving

gin and tonics, and a wonderful evening ahead. Our memorable dinner was sponsored jointly by Stanley & Sons and Loen and Noralee Panke of Redwood Lane Nursery. The delicious feast included Dungeness crab cocktails, spinach salads with pine nuts, entrees of marinated lobster tail and prime rib with all the proper accoutrements, fine wine and beer, Brut and Asti champagnes, and New York cheesecake with fresh berries. This was the perfect setting to celebrate our mutual friendships and interests. Our Dutch guests entertained us with song once again, continuing all the way back to the hotel!

I was pleased to meet many old and new friends during the Dutch Conifer Society's brief visit to the Pacific Northwest during that warm and dry week in August. Any language barrier was toppled with the help of Dick and Riet van Hoey Smith's daughters, Maike and Joan. I believe the only disappointments came when our guests were told to take a break to rest, since they wanted to continue on touring each site we visited. Their thirst for knowledge of conifers was unquenchable and their understanding vast. They seemed to thoroughly enjoy their visit.

On Wednesday, August 18th, they rode their coach to the Portland International Airport and boarded a flight to Denver to join our good friend Jerry Morris for an adventure in the Colorado mountains. Although exhausted, I regretted seeing their adventure in Oregon come to an end. ▲

About the author: Don Howse is a longtime active member of the Conifer Society and owner of Porterhowse Farms in Sandy, Oregon.

The Southeast Region announces that the the following members took office during the region's meeting on October 8th & 9th:

PresidentMaud B. Henne (Virginia)
Vice PresidentKimberly Karlin (Georgia)
Secretary/TreasurerJohn Quackenbush (Georgia)



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A Grafting Workshop will be held in the **Central Region** on January 22, 2005 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at GEE FARMS, Stockbridge, Michigan.

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The Conifer Society welcomes advertising from companies and individuals selling conifers, companion plants, gardening supplies and other plant-related products and services.

Northeast Launches Newsletter, Emphasizes Local Events

by Ridge Goodwin, Northeast Region past president

We have been searching for opportunities to bring our membership together more frequently to exchange knowledge and share our appreciation of the use of conifers in our gardens. One of the most effective schemes appears to be in this

Coniferous Contemplations
*is a very informal affair
designed to share
gardening tips, local news
and information*

concept called the “garden rendezvous,” or “garden ramble,” developed by the Central Region.

We plan to find organizers in various parts of the region who can put together an interesting day’s worth of visits to private or public gardens, which may also include a lecture sponsored by a local garden club, garden center or public garden. There needn’t be a lot of fuss or bother putting one of these affairs together – no busses, and everyone brings their own lunch. We’ll meet in the morning, hand out maps of where we’ll be going, form car pools, see the gardens, talk to people, learn a little bit, maybe make a new friend, and then disband later on in the afternoon.

The key to organizing one of these affairs will be advertising it in our new newsletter, *Coniferous Contemplations*, edited by Suzanne Mahoney (misue150

@aol.com). Other local garden clubs are another source of potential attendees (after all, this is how Gary Whittenbaugh of the Central Region gets so many people to sign up with the Conifer Society) because, well, we’re more interesting! If you had the chance to see a garden full of hostas, or roses or sweet peas as opposed to a garden full of conifers, which would you choose? No contest!

We are also inviting members to write for our *Coniferous Contemplations* newsletter. This is a very informal affair that is designed to share gardening tips, local news and information.

We are looking for state representatives who can scan their state’s horticultural press and report on coming events of interest to conifer people. Good pictures from our annual meetings, feature articles on interesting local characters and their collections, and tidbits about historic figures and places that are part of our local conifer heritage can all find a place in the newsletter. We might even have an “expert” – as in “Ask the Expert.” We’re not sure where we’re going with this endeavor, but we do know that this newsletter is a much needed connection between members in our region.

Walter Cullerton took over as our new president at the September meeting in Rochester, NY. Welcome, Walter!

*Ridge Goodwin, Past President
Northeast Region*

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Maud Henne



Maud Henne



Top: The Dawes Arboretum hosted this summer's national meeting in Newark, Ohio. Turn to page 38 for more photos and a meeting recap.

Bottom: The Schnormeier's garden, with its Oriental design motif, thrilled many national meeting attendees. Read more on page 38.



The “Angel of Hidden Lake Gardens” – a weeping Norway spruce (*Picea abies* ‘Pendula’) – is described in this issue’s Conifers in the News on page 37.