

Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 23 No. 4

Fall 2006



Randall C. Smith, courtesy of Iseli Nursery

Picea omorika 'Pendula Bruns' – 2007 Collectors Conifer of the Year
Full-size Selection – See back cover for Dwarf Selection.
Learn more about them on page 24.



See Glenn Herold's article on page 7



See Todd Lasseigne's article inside



See Terri Park's article inside



See Kimberly Karlin's article inside



See Sharon Stanford's article inside

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Conifer Quarterly

Fall 2006
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I begin this, like many of you, I've struggled through the last several months in oppressive heat and dry weather. For those of us with ACS (Addicted Conifer Syndrome) who lack the capacity to say no to the next cool or unusual plant (even though we have no idea where we will plant it), this time of year is devoted to dragging water hoses around our property. For me, this often means sitting down for dinner sometime after 9 pm. That said, I wouldn't change a thing. This is still the most satisfying endeavor that I can think of.

We are now at the point in the year when the national, central and northeastern regional meetings have been held. The national meeting was held in mid-June in Knoxville, Tennessee and I don't think I've been to a meeting that I enjoyed more. Shortly after the meeting, I received a very nice letter from a delightful couple from northern Virginia and would like to share the following from their letter: "The National Meeting was one of the best we have attended. I don't have any early records, but I think that I joined ACS shortly after it was formed. I would give this one four stars."

This reinforces the fact that there are great gardens and great garden people in every state. ACS was treated to hospitality that was as good as it gets and the meeting went off without a hiccup. There is a quote which pertains to our national meetings, "Everybody's job looks easier than yours, and the better they do it the easier it looks." Realizing all of the planning that goes into an event such as this and the seamless manner in which our meeting planners pull them off, I am amazed.

A special thanks to the following individuals who, in the generous sharing of their gardens and knowledge, added greatly to the meeting's success:

Dr. and Mrs. Alan Solomon, Private Garden

Ruth and Bill Pardue, Private Garden
Faye Beck, Private Garden

Dr. Susan Hamilton, Professor of Horticulture, University of Tennessee
Duane Ridenour, Beaver Creek Nursery

Jim McDonough, Knoxville Botanical Garden

According to our central region President, Bill Barger, the central meeting was also a huge success with over 100 in attendance. I attended the northeastern region meeting in Hartford, Connecticut in mid-September. As I anticipated, this was a lively meeting which afforded me the opportunity to see members who did not attend our national meeting, as well as to see some fantastic gardens. I also had the real honor to present the Award of Merit in person to Dennis Dodge as well as to meet Florence Waxman - widow of the late Dr. Sydney Waxman. This is an area steeped in rich garden history with so many knowledgeable gardeners. More on this meeting in the next issue.

On the business side of the ledger, the board of directors held their semi-annual meeting in June. Significant actions included the completion of the recommended revisions to the Society Bylaws and the Policies of the Board. A ballot was sent to all current members and the results are in and the vote certified. The proposed

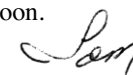
BY TOM COX

Bylaws were overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 685 (yes) to 16 (no). From my personal view, the biggest change is the streamlining of the board of directors to two representatives from each region and the fact that each region will conduct an election to select their representatives. Going forward, as the occasion arises, you may expect to hear more from your regional president concerning this.

Also of note are the initiatives that the Society takes to support conifer development and education, and acknowledge significant efforts. Below are names of individuals or institutions that have demonstrated a commitment to further the mission of our Society along with the awards that were granted.

- Dennis Dodge - 2006 ACS Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers
- Ridge Goodwin - Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award of Merit for Dedicated Support of the American Conifer Society
- University of Tennessee Trial Gardens - \$3,000 Donation
- Pennsylvania College of Technology - \$1,500 Jean Iseli Memorial grant
- Kevin Stevens - \$1,000 Scholarship for attendance at the Research Center for Japanese Garden Art

On a personal note, I have now retired from the business world. This will afford me an enhanced opportunity to pursue my passion for working with plants which many of us share. It will also allow more time to devote to matters of the American Conifer Society. See you soon.



*The morns are meeker than
they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.*

*- Emily Dickinson "Nature
XXVII, Autumn"*

The rose is out of town. The conifer is not. Day by day, season upon season, conifers never go out of town. This fall, stroll your garden. Assess your landscape and the all-season role that conifers can play in it. Take inventory. Is your conifer collection intact or in tatters? Is that extra-special plant you bought at the auction in 1990 now hidden behind the extra-special one you bought at the auction in 2000? Has this dwarf that was supposed to max out at 3 feet, now grown to 6 feet? How did that happen? Were you just too anxious to plant it in that perfect place you had in mind when you were bidding for it? Did the plant forget to read its tag or was the information simply incorrect? Typical growth for Michigan may not be typical in Tennessee.

Gardens continually evolve. As this occurs, you may need to change how you situate your conifers. Did you buy them for their form, their color characteristics, their texture? Are they placed to optimize those features? Are you considering changing your garden to integrate more conifers with compan-

ion plants or planning to create a conifer garden from scratch? Before plunging in, read the article by Glenn Herold in which he covers principles of design and illustrates how useful conifers can be as tools in your design to create a landscape of optimal beauty. Give those conifers the emphasis they need while making them work for you to create a well-designed garden.

Speaking of emphasis, conifers can light up any garden. In our last issue, Susan Martin recommended some luminous winter golden pines to us. In this issue, Todd Lasseigne suggests some "silver" conifers that can be used as tools in making your garden shine.

Reader response to our call for sharing landscaping experiences was excellent. In fact, some articles will be carried over to later issues as we begin a new column called "Landscaping with Conifers". In this issue, you'll find articles from around the country and even one from Rotterdam as J.R.P. van Hoey Smith shares some gardening guidelines developed through his own experiences at Arboretum Trompenburg. See page 16.

From her vantage point near Olympia, Washington, Sharon Stanford tells us about gardening while overlooking Puget Sound. Sharon and Ed's garden is on the ACS list of member gardens open by appointment. Read about it on page 32. The garden of Terri and Jay Park is also on that list, and beginning on page 22, Terri shows us how conifers helped them cope in suburban Indianapolis when urban sprawl crept

their way. From Conyers, Georgia, Kimberly Karlin wrote in about experience gained with their extensive conifer collection. See page 29.

If you missed the 2006 national meeting in Knoxville, you can read about how much fun we had as Don Howse describes it from a western perspective on page 34. You may, after reading this, together with the article that follows it about the 2007 meeting to be held in Seattle, block out at least July 26-29 on your calendar of fun. Maybe you'll find time for post-tour activities as well.

If you glance outside your window and leaves are twirling in the autumn breezes, your conifers will be dancing happily in it, too. As some get ready to change colors, they are preparing to reward you with winter interest.

Regardless of the season, they never disappoint us. I think I'll stop here and go for a walk.

Happy planning!

Evelyn



Next issue:

Winter 2007 – Special photo issue plus pendulous conifers

Some of you have pendulous plants in your gardens. Some of your fellow members would like to see them. We don't know who has what and who wants what but we can help you show and tell. The next issue will be our annual centerfold issue. For newcomers, it's not what you think. It's our annual color insert edition, a good opportunity to see how much photographic talent lurks out there amongst the cones. Send us your photos and/or your stories about pendulous plants by November 12. If there are none in your own garden, photos of drive-bys accepted.

Future issue themes:

Highway Treasures
Unusual, Rare and Endangered Conifers
Cephalotaxus

*We welcome news alerts about conifers or about our members.
Contact Evelyn Cox to discuss your ideas.*

Publication Dates

Issue	Calendar Quarter	Deadline to submit articles	Publication Date (approx. mailing)
Winter	Jan/Feb/Mar	Nov 12	Jan 15
Spring	Apr/May/Jun	Feb 11	Apr 16
Summer	Jul/Aug/Sept	May 13	July 16
Fall	Oct/Nov/Dec 31	Aug 12	Oct 15

Submit articles/photos to:

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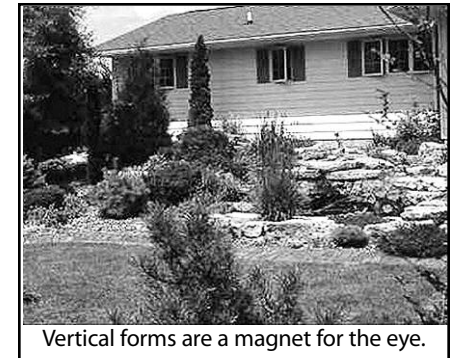
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Conifers in Design

Photos and text by Glenn Herold

It wasn't too long ago that the main function of conifers in a landscape was to provide winter color. An evergreen conifer could be counted on to spice up an otherwise drab January panorama. Functional? Yes. Exciting? No. But with the conifer palette that now exists, a designer can find one to use for virtually every design element. A little basic design knowledge will allow you to spice up your landscape like the pros.



Vertical forms are a magnet for the eye.

The tools of design

Let's start with the tools of design – *line, form, texture, and color*. *Line* directs eye movement. A vertical element will entice the eye upward while a weeping plant carries the eye toward the ground. Round or spreading forms carry your eye easily across the landscape. Thus, you see that

line is closely intertwined with *form*. Overuse of vertical elements can be agitating, but discrete use of them creates an exclamation point in the design. Don't use vertical or pyramidal forms at the corner of a house for they draw the viewer's attention to that location, rather than toward the front door. To soften pyramidal forms flank them with round or spreading forms.



Curved line carries the eye to the gazebo.

Let's start with the tools of design – *line, form, texture, and color*.

Texture is a measure of the surface qualities of an object. The basic measurements of texture - coarse and fine - usually refer to the boldness of a plant's foliage. However, texture also includes the reflectiveness of the surface, the density of the leaves, and a description of the foliage pattern (textural expression). Bold, glossy, or dense foliage will grab the eye's attention more than fine, dull, or sparse foliage. Textural expression can be used to mimic dissimilar objects in a

vignette, thus amplifying eye appeal.

Color is probably the most overused and overrated design element. It is easy to think of color as something to use to attract attention, such as a yellow or variegated plant, but color is only one of the tools you have to work with. Don't sacrifice form or texture for color. If you wish to draw attention to a particular location, you have many choices, not just color. Eye magnets include unusual forms and bold textural contrasts within any element, as well as warm colors. But, whatever elements you use, remember a basic rule – in order to have a general, you need privates. Too many accents or focal points in the landscape create chaos.

The principles of design

The tools of design are applied to the principles of design – *repetition, variety, balance, emphasis, sequence, and scale*. *Repetition and variety* work together and are somewhat self-explanatory. However, using repetition and variety does not mean that you have to repeat the same plant. The repetition and variety are of the design elements - line, form, texture, and color. As an example, the yellow in a plant used as a solo specimen in one area of the landscape can be repeated with a yellow variegated plant used in a group setting in another area.

Balance implies equal visual weight on each side of a vignette. Visual weight is created by the size of an object, its texture, form, and color. Those qualities that attract the eye, such as warm colors, bold textures, and vertical forms, carry a heavy visual weight. Fine textures, cool colors, and rounded or spreading forms are lightweights. It may take several lightweights (“privates”) to balance one



Textural contrast between *Abies koreana* 'Aurea' and the hosta creates a strong point of emphasis.

heavyweight (“general”).

Contrast is one way to achieve *emphasis* in the landscape. The photo above illustrates contrast of textural weight, but you can also contrast any other element of design, such as glossiness, density, size, form, and color. Another way to achieve emphasis is to make a large group of a plant, rather than use a solo specimen. But remember, in order to achieve emphasis, you must have subordination.

Sequence is movement in the landscape from one area to another. You could think of it as moving from one room in your house to another room. Each room has its own unique style and design, but relates to the other rooms in an overall theme. In your landscape, you may have a patio “room”, a play “room”, a reading “room”, and countless others. These can vary in the amount of light in the room, the closeness of the overhead canopy, the terrain (berms, terracing), color scheme, etc. Choose an overall theme for your landscape. This may be as simple as a preponderance of conifers, a color theme, a landscape which is attractive to birds, or even landscaping with culinary uses in mind. To move from one room to another, you need to

create smooth transitions. Rapid changes in design usually create a startling effect, which may be what you as the designer want, but may not feel harmonious to others.



Picea abies 'Remontii' mimics the texture of the thyme and cotoneaster and helps to soften the harsh paving materials.

Scale is the size relationship of one element to another. We are most comfortable with what we call human scale and are uneasy when we are either much larger or smaller than the object(s) next to us. Picture yourself in a kindergarten setting. The smallness of the desks makes you feel like a giant! On the other hand, suppose you are sitting on a patio and all the plants next to it are 15 feet tall. You might feel like a dwarf. Parks are good examples in dealing with this difference in scale. Large trees used for shade are typically supplemented with groups of



Juniperus chinensis 'Hetzii' is out of scale with this house.

smaller trees or shrubs, plants to which we can relate.

Creating beauty with conifers

The tools of line, form, texture and color reside in the conifer family in almost limitless variations for any conifer lover to use in the landscape. Select them to enhance the beauty of your landscape for you and your guests to enjoy. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder! What you perceive as beauty, though, constitutes complete aesthetic organization. Ugliness is sometimes just lack of organization! Using design tools and applying them to the principles of design will create that aesthetic organization that creates beauty and the wow effect that goes with it.

About the author: Glenn Herold is Professor of Horticulture at Illinois Central College in East Peoria. He is also curator of the Illinois Central College Arboretum which he founded in 1980. In addition to dwarf conifers, he is interested in woodland wildflowers, small maples and hostas. He, and his wife Terry, are members of ACS. He has served as vice president of the central region and is a past president of the Central Illinois Hosta Society.

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Sterling Silver Conifers

Photos and text by Dr. F. Todd Lasseigne

The beauty of conifers can be attributed to many factors: their graceful, architectural form; their evergreen leaves, especially when laden with snow; and the color of their foliage. From all shades of green to gold to the blues and silvers, there is truly a conifer for every garden and landscape. “Silver” color in conifers is, of course, not true metallic silver, but a mixture of blue-grays to whitened greens. This perceived silver coloration in conifers is usually brought about through the deposition of waxes or resins on the leaves and stems of the plant. On the leaves, these waxes are usually more abundant on the lower leaf surface, but because of mutation or variation within or among natural populations, individuals with waxy upper leaf surfaces can be found. Such is the case with *Abies concolor* ‘Candicans’, a cultivar selected for its exceptionally gray-white leaves. Less commonly in conifers, silver color can be caused by light reflective and refractive qualities of the foliage or stems, or due to the presence of hairs or scales along the leaves. These factors which bring about silver coloration in conifers are almost always an adaptive response by plants to drought or desiccation stress during the summer and/or winter months. If one studies natural populations of a given species, the degree of silver color generally increases in traveling from a less (water) stressful to a more stressful habitat. Thus, the coastal Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii*) with its elegant emerald-green leaves transitions into the interior

Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca*) with its distinct blue-green foliage as one travels eastward across the western mountain ranges.

Here, then, is presented a short list of interesting conifers with silver or quasi-silver-blue leaves for your consideration in perfecting your landscaping scheme.

Abies concolor ‘Candicans’, mentioned above, is certainly a well-beloved classic of the silver conifers, but there are others. Another equally beautiful fir is the blue Spanish fir – *Abies pinsapo* ‘Glauca’. With its spirally-arranged, short leaves, this fir sets an elegant stage in any setting. Recent medium-term (10 years and counting) grafting studies have even shown that *Abies pinsapo* can be grafted onto *A. firma* rootstocks, thereby allowing for successful cultivation and survival in warm climate areas such as the southeastern U.S., and in areas with poorly draining soils such as the lower Midwest.

Here, then, is presented a short list of interesting conifers with silver or quasi-silver-blue leaves for your consideration in perfecting your landscaping scheme.

Of course, when it comes to silver-blue, the cultivars of Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*) are king. Even though native populations consist mostly of green-leaved trees, many silver- to blue-

leaved cultivars have been selected and named. These continue to be the standard against which other silver and blue conifers are judged and compared. However, if only for curiosity’s sake, another spruce is a welcome addition to the garden – *Picea glauca* ‘Sander’s Blue’. Originating as a semi-stable chimera, ‘Sander’s Blue’ appears like a dwarf Alberta spruce, except that certain portions of the plant have wax-coated leaves, while the remainder of the plant bears the standard green leaves. Overall, this dense, slow-growing, pyramidal spruce appears as a green and blue-green mosaic of foliage with no two plants appearing exactly alike.

There are many pines that qualify for bearing silver to blue-white needles, from the familiar *Pinus strobus* of the eastern U.S. to the much lesser-known digger pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) of the far western U.S. and Mexico with its classic long, grayed-green needles. Two pines impressive for their adaptability and garden merits are *Pinus kwangtungensis* and



Cupressus arizonica ‘Silver Smoke’

Pinus parviflora ‘Adcock’s Dwarf’. Both are white pines, bearing needles in fives, and both are Asian species in origin. Guangdong pine (*Pinus kwangtungensis*) is native only to the southernmost provinces of China, and yet has grown for years in the relatively much colder climates of Oregon and the southeastern U.S. Its short, recurved, brightly-blue-striped needles, often appearing along the branches in tuft-like clusters, are attractive and noticeable from far away. Likewise, ‘Adcock’s Dwarf’, an exceptional selection of Japanese white pine, is distinguished by its very short needles and dense, congested growth form and plant habit. Thriving throughout much of the U.S., ‘Adcock’s Dwarf’ is a pine that should be better known in gardens.

Wrapping up the pine family, one would be remiss in not mentioning the true cedars (*Cedrus*). Two relatively



Pinus kwangtungensis

recently introduced cultivars of *Cedrus deodara* with very good silver-blue foliage color are worth noting – ‘Glacier Blue’ and ‘Bush’s Electra’ (or ‘Electra’). ‘Glacier Blue’ is a superb, small-statured cultivar exhibiting a somewhat spreading habit, yet still bearing the classic pendant branch tips of the species. ‘Bush’s Electra’, on the other hand, exhibits orthodox upright growth habit with a narrow pyramidal form in youth. However, unlike other Deodar cedars, ‘Bush’s Electra’ is very densely branched with young plants filling in much more quickly than do seedling plants. In many ways, ‘Bush’s Electra’ is like an improved form of ‘Compacta’. Both ‘Glacier Blue’ and ‘Bush’s Electra’ have striking silver-blue foliage.

In the cypress family, Arizona cypress (*Cupressus arizonica*) stands out immediately for its bright silver-gray foliage. Two cultivars that have proven their worth over time in the humid and wet southeastern U.S. are ‘Carolina Sapphire’ and ‘Silver Smoke’. Although in color both are similar (with ‘Silver Smoke’ being slightly more silver-gray), ‘Carolina Sapphire’ develops a broad-oval canopy in time while ‘Silver Smoke’ remains more columnar. Similar in foliage color to both of these Arizona cypresses is *Chamaecyparis thyoides* ‘Glauca’, the blue Atlantic white-cedar. Although many clones and cultivars of Atlantic white-cedar have proven to be disappointingly short-lived in cultivation (in clayey soils), ‘Glauca’ survives and thrives better than most. It also has more color interest, owing to the glaucous waxy coating on its scale leaves. A Southern Hemisphere relative of the true cypresses (*Cupressus*) and false cy-



Chamaecyparis thyoides ‘Glauca’

presses (*Chamaecyparis*) is *Austrocedrus chilensis*, the Chilean incense-cedar. This fabulous and underappreciated conifer bears elegant silver-white to whitened-green markings on both the upper and lower leaf surfaces. With a minimal breeze, the movement of the branchlets creates a shimmering effect. As long as a well-drained site is provided, this evergreen has proven itself hardy at temperatures near 0°F.

There are many, many junipers that qualify for bearing silver or blue-silver foliage, among them *Juniperus deppeana* ‘McPhetter’ (a brilliantly blue form of the alligator juniper); *Juniperus scopulorum* ‘Wichita Blue’ (a smaller-sized, and intensely silver-blue-leaved cultivar of Rocky Mountain juniper); *Juniperus × pfitzeriana* ‘Blue Vase’ (a Pfitzer-type juniper of the brightest blue-gray color); and many others. *Juniperus conferta*

‘Silver Mist’, a silver-gray-leaved form of the familiar shore juniper, has especially pleased me. This clone originated in Japan and exhibits a more restrained growth rate; but, unlike other shore juniper cultivars, it must be given full sun conditions throughout its life or plants will decline severely. Lastly, the silver eastern redcedar, *Juniperus virginiana* ‘Glauca’, is an old cultivar of a familiar eastern North American tree, but is still poorly known. Although old plants can occasionally be found in arboreta, this plant is not widely cultivated. It is as adaptable as the species and deserves to be more widely planted.

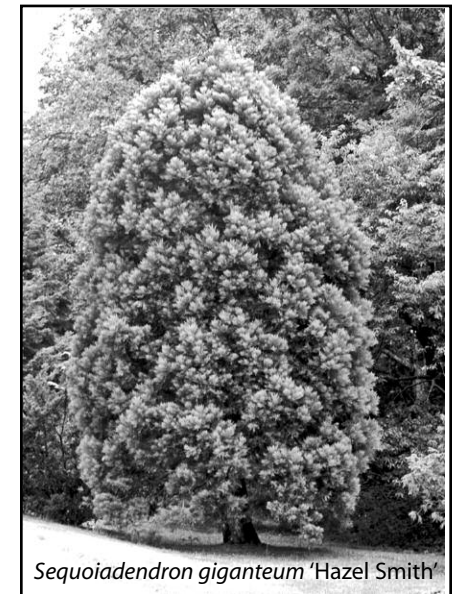
The final trio of silver conifers in this article includes members of the former Taxodiaceae (the baldcypress family), now all included in the Cupressaceae [the (true) cypress family]: *Cryptomeria japonica* ‘Yaku’, *Cunninghamia lanceolata* ‘Samurai’, and *Sequoiadendron giganteum* ‘Hazel Smith’. All three of these

upright, pyramidal evergreens bear striking silver-blue to powder-blue foliage and they are all not easily found in cultivation.

Cryptomeria japonica ‘Yaku’ is a blue-white form of the Japanese cedar. This clone hails from the southern Japanese island of Yakushima, where, evidently, the native populations of this species typically bear this unusual foliage coloration (possibly as an adaptive response to Yakushima’s warmer climate). ‘Yaku’ is the most brightly blue-white colored cultivar of any *Cryptomeria japonica*, much more colorful than ‘Tarheel Blue’. In North Carolina, ‘Yaku’ has erroneously been called ‘Tony’s Blue’. *Cunninghamia lanceolata* ‘Samurai’, originating in Tennessee, bears sharply-pointed, bright silver-blue foliage, a mature plant standing out as a beautiful beacon in any landscape. It is believed to be hardier than the similarly appearing *Cunninghamia lanceolata*



Cryptomeria japonica ‘Yaku’



Sequoiadendron giganteum ‘Hazel Smith’

'Glauca'. Lastly, *Sequoiadendron giganteum* 'Hazel Smith' is a smoky-gray selection of the Sierra redwood; its brightly colored scale leaves standing in stark contrast to the usual somber green color of the species.

This concludes your tour of sterling silver-colored conifers to be considered in your landscape or garden scheme, any one of which will surely make it shine.

About the author: Todd Lasseigne, an ACS member, is Executive Director of the Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden in North Carolina. He earned his master's degree at the University of Georgia, studied abroad in the U.K. for one year as the Martin McLaren Fellow, and obtained his doctorate at N.C. State University. Formerly assistant director of the JC Raulston Arboretum at N.C. State, he now resides in Kernersville, North Carolina. He has written articles for *Fine Gardening* magazine, *Nursery Notes*, and *NM Pro*.



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The Jean Iseli Memorial Award

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The Conifer Society, which supports the development, conservation and propagation of conifers with an emphasis on dwarf or unusual varieties, awards a \$1,500 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.

Proposals must contain the following:

- Name, full address, and phone number of the applicant/institution
- Brief description of how the ACS funds would be used
- List of plant materials (if the request involves conifer purchases)
- Budget
- Short overview of mission statement or horticultural background of your institution

Send applications to:

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or by regular mail:

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Applications must be received by June 1, 2007

Ethan Johnson chairs a three-person committee that reviews applications and makes its recommendation to the ACS Board of Directors at the annual summer meeting. Announcements of the award recipient will be made by August 1, 2007.




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Small Gets Big

by J.R.P. van Hoey Smith

The owners of a small garden and the curator of an arboretum have the same problem: “Where to plant what?” This is one of the most interesting and informative facets. The expression, “One is never too old to learn” is very relative. Unexpected problems, not foreseen, always have to be countered.

Everywhere in our society, some form of advice or guidelines can be given which mostly are learned in the practice. Often, even following this advice or these guidelines, mistakes are made and one only later realizes that wrong estimates were made.

When showing individuals or groups around, many times the following question I have to face: “The arboretum is so beautiful but what is your system of management?” I always answer that I have no system at all, only guidelines. I am in shipping and I only have seen the inside of a university when giving a lecture. The guidelines are:

1. I always mix, as much as possible, evergreens and deciduous plants in order to have a beautiful garden also in winter.
2. I look carefully at the combination of colors. Two different shades of pink, especially with rhododendrons, should never be planted next to each other.
3. The vistas should be kept widely open.
4. “The axe is my paintbrush, now the chainsaw is my paintbrush.”

The expression in 4. above originates from Duke Puckler, the famous German landscape architect from around 1900.

He was owner of the estate Muskau, situated on both sides of the river Oder, now the border between Germany and Poland. Beyond his own park, he also developed several other parks including Branitz to which he moved after selling Muskau. In practice, this means that if two trees touch each other, after ten years, you have two half-trees as the other halves are dead, owing to not enough light. I prefer one whole to two halves!

Mistakes are made and one only later realizes that wrong estimates were made

Before and after gaining much experience, we realize that we know not enough. Mistakes are made but they have to be repaired. This can be achieved by cutting or transplanting. As a matter of fact, planting is always done too closely. I do so, too, realizing that transplanting should be done in the future.

Even the most prominent dendrologist sometimes gambles, not always correctly estimating how big a plant will grow. Once the Dutch most knowledgeable dendrologist S.C.A. Doorenbos saw 1,500 different conifers on one hectare (2.5 acres) and this he called “the owner’s stamp collection”.

For a park and any arboretum, it is necessary to plan on the long term. It should be nice for following generations and money for transplanting is often missing. The next generation is mostly less knowledgeable and is not aware of the history. There, making a good basic

plan on which they can elaborate is a great help and a good solution for long-term management.

Garden architects often plan on the short term in order to generate immediate success. Very often, they do not know the plants they work with and how these behave in the future. They are not assisted when nurserymen do not give advice against buying a certain plant.

Below are some plants with which I have experience in the Arboretum Trompenburg in Rotterdam. For their ultimate size, they were planted too closely or too near a path. Cutting or pruning back is then the solution. Both ways can be ugly and painful. Pruning conifers is especially difficult. All of these were sold as “suitable for rock garden or trough”. Mostly, the sellers are not familiar with the properties of the plants; it is not done intentionally. Moreover, on poor sand, they keep their intended form more easily than when they are planted in rich soil.

Cryptomeria japonica ‘Vilmoriniana’ should be suitable for a trough. After 30 years, the height is 1.80m (6 feet) and it is 2.5m (8 feet) wide. Standing too close to a path, it should be replaced as pruning is nearly impossible owing to its compact habit.

Juniperus communis ‘Hornibrookii’, bought as a dwarf. After 30 years, it is 60cm (2 feet) high but the spread is 6m (20 feet)! I have to prune it for keeping the path open and saving its neighbors.

Pinus parviflora ‘Adcock’s Dwarf’. Sold as suitable for a trough it is now 1.20m (4 feet) high and the diameter is 1.60m (5 feet).

Pinus sylvestris Beauvronensis’, everywhere thought to be a compact dwarf – here measures 2m (6.5 feet) high

and 3m (10 feet) in diameter. Planted 40 years ago.

Pinus sylvestris ‘Watereri’ was planted 60 years ago. Its height now is 4m (13 feet), its diameter, 7m (23 feet). One can walk under and admire its beautiful orange bark.

These are only some examples.

About the author: J.R.P. van Hoey Smith is a lifetime member of the ACS. Considered as one of the world’s authorities on conifers, he is co-author of *CONIFERS THE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA*, Volumes 1 and 2. His awards include: The Laurens Medal, the Vetch Memorial Medal in Gold and the ACS Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers in 2005. Upon acceptance of the ACS award, he quoted Marten Luther: “If I know I will die tomorrow, today I will plant a tree!”

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Seed Exchange Program

After a brief hiatus, we are pleased to announce that the Seed Exchange Program is back in full swing. As was announced in the Spring 2006 edition, Mr. Wayne Jope has graciously agreed to step up to the plate and administer this program. Over the years this program has served as a real member benefit for those wishing to obtain seed of rare and unusual species at a very low cost. This is made possible through the generous contributions of a number of individuals and institutions that take the time to collect, catalog and then send us the seeds.

To obtain a form that you may use to order the seeds go to the ACS website www.conifersociety.org.

On a related note, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

Seed cleaning - all seed should be cleaned before being sent to the Chairperson.

Seed Chairperson is not responsible for seed viability and viability testing will not be done through this program

Seed Chairperson is not responsible for taxonomic verification

Please forward all donations as well as questions to Wayne at:

ACS Seed Exchange
c/o Great Hill Hort Foundation
137 Kensington Rd
Hampton Falls, NH 03844
e-mail Wayne@ghhf.org or fax (603) 929-1810.

SUBMITTING ARTICLES AND IMAGES TO THE CONIFER QUARTERLY

Articles - Text file formats

Three acceptable file formats are Microsoft Word (.doc), Text (.txt) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). If you use WordPerfect, the article must be saved as text (.txt) prior to submission. If you cannot submit your article electronically, mail your typed, double-spaced pages to the editor. If you do not communicate electronically, allow time for the editing process to be accomplished through the postal system. Please consider looking at future themes and submitting your article well in advance.

Photos and other image formats

Every article can benefit from a great picture. Professional quality slides can now be converted to a computer disk at your local photo shop. Original sketches and drawings, when appropriate to the subject matter can be mailed for scanning by our production team. High-quality digital images can be accepted as e-mail attachments in Photoshop (.psd), TIFF (.tif) or JPEG (.jpg) formats. JPEG is preferred.

IMPORTANT – Digital image resolution guidelines:

Contributors should verify the pixel resolution of each image before submission. No image less than 900 pixels wide can be considered. A pixel width of 1200 or more is preferred. Keep in mind that pixels will be lost if excess background area must be cropped out.

The reason for this 900-pixel lower limit is that a 900-pixel wide image printed at the industry-standard resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi) can be printed no larger than 3 inches wide (900 pixels/inch divided by 300 pixels equals 3 inches). Front cover shots are typically 4.5 inches wide. If you used a low-resolution camera setting to save memory when you took the picture, it cannot be artificially enhanced. The numbers can be changed but the quality will not increase.

In general, images selected for the covers will be published in color, while images used on interior pages will be published in black and white. The editor will make every effort to return original slides and drawings to the sender via First Class Mail after the issue is published. However, the American Conifer Society cannot be responsible for materials lost during shipping. Digital media such as CDs will not be returned unless specifically requested within three months after publication.

Made for Each Other

Book review by Tom Cox

This book review comes about in a somewhat circuitous manner. Several months ago, my good friend and fellow conifer enthusiast (nut), Jody Karlin donated a 6' (20m) *Pinus albicaulis* (whitebark pine) to our arboretum. Not being familiar with the species, I began some research. While this review is not about *P. albicaulis*; I shall inform you that being a timberline tree native to high altitude areas of Western North America, it did not survive long in the heat and humidity of Georgia.

All was not lost, as my studies led me to a most interesting book written by Ronald M. Lanner titled *Made for Each Other - A Symbiosis of Birds and Pines*.

The premise of the book is that "some trees and birds are made for each other" and that certain pines are unable to reproduce without the help of particular birds. In the case of *P. albicaulis* it is the Clark's Nutcracker. Mr. Lanner tells us that the nutcracker "cannot raise its young in these habitats without feeding them the nutritious seeds of the whitebark pine." By this mutual interplay, a symbiotic or mutualistic relationship is created. The author points out that "in playing out their roles these partners change the landscape. The environment they create provides life's necessities to many other plants and animals. Working in concert, Clark's Nutcracker and the whitebark pine build ecosystems."

This same incredible phenomenon is repeated throughout certain other

areas of the Northern Hemisphere and "is the majority condition among the world's so-called soft pines". Unlike most pine species, these pines' cones do not open up as part of the reproductive process. Instead, they rely on specific birds to release the seed. In the case of the Clark's Nutcracker, the birds shred the cones with their bills and then bury them in the ground. Some are later eaten, and those that are left germinate the next year.

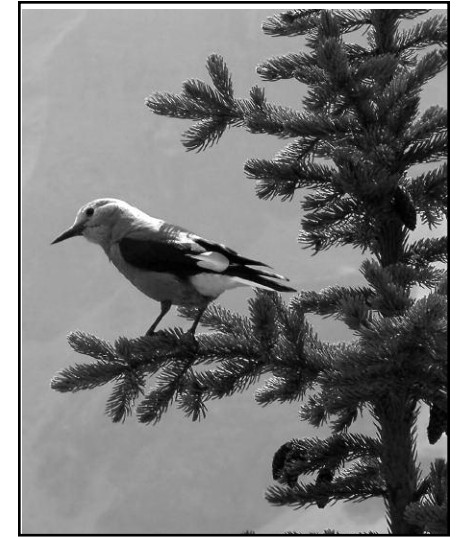
Mr. Lanner also develops the further interdependence of plant and animal life. One such example is the Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*). Following the growth of the *P. albicaulis* seedlings, various spruce also start to appear. Since they prefer some shade for proper growth, they start life in the shadows of *P. albicaulis* and then their presence encourages other plant life. Fascinating how the chain lengthens.

The author devotes an entire chapter to the genus *Pinus*, offering some interesting tidbits, particularly on the Pinyon pines. This chapter is an excellent follow-up to the summer edition of the *Conifer Quarterly* that featured pines.

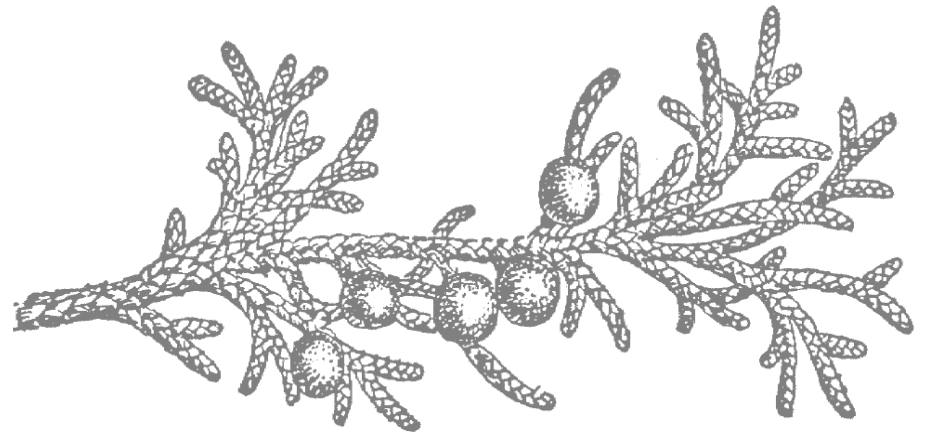
The premise that certain pines and bird species may have co-evolved is thought provoking. In the end, the author examines long-term consequences of the destruction of the pine forest on the entire ecosystem and asks, "If so, has it happened more than once? Does it continue? What does the future

hold?"

I highly recommend this book to anyone who desires to broaden his or her knowledge of pines, particularly regarding how certain ones are intertwined with the existence of other plant and animal life. At slightly under 150 pages, it's an easy read, and for the most part, non-technical. I think it would also be appropriate for children as you look to pique their interest in nature and illustrate the importance of mutualistic relationships.



Clark's Nutcracker



Bethlehem Nursery

66 Jackson Lane, Bethlehem, CT 06751

Propagators and growers of rare dwarf and miniature conifers, witches' brooms and rare *Sciadopitys* cultivars. Catering to the most serious collectors and gardeners.

Owners: Dennis and Mary Lou Dodge Phone/Fax 203.266.7783

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Learning to Landscape with Conifers

(How I Contracted Addicted Conifer Syndrome)

by Terri Park

It was autumn 1994 and I was president of my neighborhood association with my finger on the pulse of new development in our previously rural area. Our northern Indianapolis suburb was feeling the pinch of the city creeping into our area. There were new subdivisions planned for both ends of our rural county road and anticipated traffic flow in the hundreds per day. We had previously enjoyed knowing who owned every car that passed our house. Change was coming with a vengeance, and I needed to design a living screen from traffic.

I began that winter researching evergreen woody shrubs and trees of interest. I didn't want to hide the entire house from the road, but did want a chest-high sight blockage of the cars going past in ten years time. We have a 100-year-old home and it sits only 40 feet from the right of way. Our four acres provided a buffer from the other sides, but the proximity of the road was the problem. Half of our 280 feet of frontage, was already planted in *Tsuga canadensis* as a natural hedge. My husband Jay and I picked up any book from the hardware and garden stores that contained "evergreen" information because we wanted all-year screening from traffic.

Change was coming with a vengeance, and I needed to design a living screen from traffic.

The total planting area was approximately 15 feet x 65 feet. I developed a list of possible plants that would grow in our Zone 5 and threw in a few flowering shrubs for a bit of color interest. I had already learned that a monoculture hedge was not the correct path, and wanted to design a random pattern repeat with much variety and a more natural look than the traditional "formal hedge." My instincts told me that I didn't have a formal house (rural farmhouse) so I shouldn't have a formal hedge (monoculture and boring). So, as a do-it-yourselfer, I applied a little drafting knowledge to the projected plant size at 15 years and came up with a landscape plan. This was virgin territory for me.

My plant lists were limited to the run-of-the-mill plants available in nurseries at the time plus a few that I searched to find. I started with a plan that zigzagged plants in a mixed border. Some of the original plants have now been removed and replaced with more desirable conifers. After ten years, the plants are in this order:

Hosta 'Glory'
Tsuga canadensis 'Pendula'
Thuja occidentalis 'Rheingold'
Taxus X media 'Densiformis'
Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset'
Thuja occidentalis 'Holmstrup'
Hemerocallis 'Stella de Oro'
Thuja occidentalis 'Recurva Nana'
Taxus X media 'Densiformis'
Thuja occidentalis 'Degroot's Spire'
Clematis 'Niobe'
Thuja occidentalis 'Little Giant'

Buxus microphylla 'Wintergreen' 2
Hibiscus syriacus 3 in 1 (red, white, blue)

Hosta 'Birchwood Parky's Blue'
Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Sungold'
Pyrus calleryana 'Aristocrat'
Juniperus communis 'Jackii'
Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Pygmaea Chimo Hiba'
Juniperus sp. (unknown from Dawes arboretum - has yellow tips.)
Chrysanthemum sp. 'Rust Cushion'
Thuja occidentalis 'Holmstrup'
Tsuga canadensis 'Pendula'
Juniperus squamata 'Blue Elf'
Juniperus chinensis 'Plumosa Aurea'
Acer griseum
Ilex glabra 'Densa'
Heuchera 'Splendens'
Picea pungens 'Iseli Fastigiata'
Hosta 'Blue Betty Lou'
Hemerocallis 'Chicago Princess'
Hemerocallis 'Song of Praise'

Variety is achieved through change of texture, color, and shape, even though most of the shrubs are in the same height range 11 years later. Some of the earlier deciduous blooming shrubs have been replaced by ACS auction plant acquisitions and I had a couple more *Thuja occidentalis* 'Little Giant' that did not withstand the snowplow's load and became disfigured. These were replaced by better conifers. The *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Nikko Blue', *Cotoneaster divaricata*, and *Rhododendron* 'Purple Gem' were moved or replaced. The Nikko Blue hydrangea (which turns pink in alkaline soil and blue in acid soil) originally served as my "acidity index" plant to tell me if I'd added enough sulfur under the hardwood mulch to change our neutral Indiana clay. I've since located a pH meter from

a local hardware store and mulch with fine pine bark where the slope isn't too steep.

That's the research that started the Addicted Conifer Syndrome. An article about free-form beds of conifers in Fine Gardening gave it another nudge. We then joined the American Conifer Society from that article and attended the National Meeting in Chicago in 1997. After meeting so many nice people, we were hooked!

We've since removed an entire apple orchard of 24 trees and fruit-bearing vines and shrubs that required high maintenance, enlarging our conifer collection to cover about three acres of our nearly four acre plot. Among them are other rare and unusual trees and shrubs that will grow in our area, accompanied by a modest number of sun and shade perennials dotted in between as color complements.

What started out as a defense against urbanization turned into an extreme love for conifers for their year-round beauty and low maintenance. Weighing beauty and effort, conifers are a lot of bang for the buck, and they can be enjoyed in the five drab months from November to March. We're truly addicted!

About the author: Terri and Jay Park have been members of the ACS since 1997. Regional meetings are a favorite part of their conifer-collecting hobby because visiting other collectors' gardens always provides inspiration in plant material and design and other members become friends.

Collectors Conifer of the Year

The Collectors Conifer of the Year committee is delighted to announce this year's two winning selections for the Collectors Conifer of the Year! One is a charming dwarf golden spruce that the committee thinks is one of the most exciting discoveries of recent times; the other is an oddly interesting slow-growing columnar spruce with a pronounced weeping habit. Both are now available and are being offered for sale exclusively to members of the American Conifer Society.

Our plants, grown for us by a select group of Oregon growers who specialize in conifer production, are shipped to you in a dormant condition in early to mid-March. With a USDA hardiness rating of zone 4, both spruces should be adaptable to most areas of the United States where conifers are commonly grown. Both plants come with a conditional one-year/one-time replacement guarantee. Plants will be shipped to you via UPS ground transportation where they can be planted immediately or maintained outdoors in a protected place until the ground can be worked.

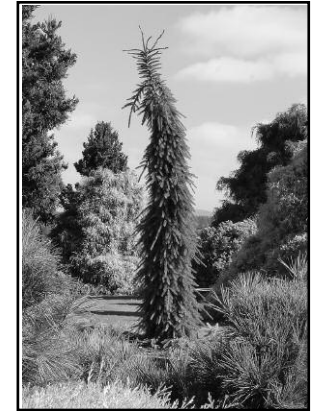
All plants offered in the Collectors Conifer of the Year program will be accompanied by our beautifully designed plant label created exclusively for the American Conifer Society. This unique, 30 pt. anodized-aluminum tag with its photo-etched information permanently engraved identifies each plant with its botanical name, the year of its selection, and certification that it is a designee of the American Conifer Society Collectors Conifer of the Year program.

The purpose of the Collectors Conifer of the Year program is to make conifer rarities available for purchase by our membership that are not ordinarily found through normal conifer-supply channels. Very often, plants that have high value to collectors do not enjoy mass appeal, and are consequently produced in only nominal amounts. The selection committee's objective is to identify plants that would be of interest to conifer collectors, then have them produced in sufficient quantities so that everyone in the Society may enjoy them. The proceeds from this endeavor will go towards fulfilling the mission of the Society, which is to educate the public in the appreciation and enjoyment of conifers, attract new members, and provide services such as the Collectors Conifer of the Year program that add value associated with membership in the Society.

Enclosed with your Conifer Quarterly is your 2007 Collectors Conifer of the Year information and ordering packet. Please indulge yourself by welcoming these exquisite new plants into your garden, and at the same time, assist the Society in fulfilling its worthy mission!

Picea omorika 'Pendula Bruns'

"Elegant" and "graceful" are two descriptive terms that come to mind when viewing this narrow upright form of Serbian Spruce. The many short branches, laden with numerous bi-colored needles, hang and overlay one another on this narrow skyward growing tree. This stately conifer, whether staked and trained as a slender spire, or allowed to develop individual character by permitting its leader to meander gracefully as it ascends, is sure to become an elegant focal point in the garden. Growing slowly when young, it soon develops like an exclamation mark. It is at its best when combined with low growing summer perennials or dwarf shrubs, such as heathers or heaths. It was first introduced by Bruns Nursery of Germany in 1955 and, only recently, has this fine selection become available to American gardeners. The Serbian spruce is regarded by many to be the most beautiful spruce species, and 'Pendula Bruns' is, perhaps, the finest of all the *Picea omorika* selections.



Randall C. Smith, courtesy of Iseil Nursery

Picea orientalis 'Tom Thumb'

Like P.T. Barnum's General Tom Thumb, a diminutive curiosity, this Golden Gem of oriental spruce is a wonder to display. It was originally found as a baseball sized witches' broom in Nyack, New York on the upright golden form of oriental spruce named 'Skylands'. 'Tom Thumb' grows to a dense, low mound with radiating tiny twigs bearing numerous short bright golden-yellow needles at the outer tips. The shaded interior foliage of the cushion is lime-green, creating a pleasing contrast to the bright golden-yellow outer color. 'Tom Thumb' is ideal for the small, intimate garden setting like the rock garden, miniature railroad garden, trough display, or individual decorative pot. This very special golden miniature spruce has been

coveted by conifer collectors since its discovery about 20 years ago, and this offering of 250 five-year-old plants is the largest single crop release to date. Every collector will want to have this Golden Nugget nestled in his or her garden treasure chest.



Randall C. Smith, courtesy of Iseil Nursery

Some Advice We Give Our Clients

by Dave Dannaher

My love of gardening and being outdoors started at a very early age. My father used to tell the story about how, as a tiny toddler in diapers, I would follow him around the garden with a trowel in one hand and a dirt clod in the other! So no one was surprised when I graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in landscape horticulture and started my own business, Dannaher Landscaping.

One of the first non-college books I purchased, (in 1973) was *Manual of Cultivated Conifers* by P. den Ouden/Bloom. I was amazed at the incredible number of plants that were hardy for our area (central Ohio) but were not locally available. Local growers assumed that these plants were too “exotic” looking and since there was little demand for the unusual plants, there was not a market for them. I soon realized that the only way I was going to get some of these plants was to graft and bud them myself. I still use my original hot hut for propagation, but I am constantly learning and refining my techniques, producing about 7,000 grafts every year. Not bad for a “Mom and Pop” business!

I found my market niche in producing rare and unusual plants. My special interest is in dwarf conifers. Over the past 30 years, the nursery industry has changed dramatically in response to chain grocery stores incorporating garden centers into their sales and the

mindset that anyone qualifies as a landscaper.

Our philosophy is that gardening should be fun. I ask people, “Now how much fun can it be if you have to keep replacing plants? Sure, you might have gotten it while you were picking up a few items at the grocery, maybe it was on sale, or maybe it is the latest “fad” plant, but sometimes you get what you pay for!” So we stress proper plant selection and plant care.

I found my market niche in producing rare and unusual plants. My special interest is in dwarf conifers.

Proper plant selection begins by asking the client about the site - how much light, how much wind, maximum height, soil type, natural boundaries such as sidewalks, air conditioners, etc. We always suggest a few evergreens to “anchor” the landscape throughout the seasons. Clients can be easily overwhelmed at the number and different types of plant materials from which they can choose. This is where professional guidance and advice can be helpful. We stress the added benefits of many dwarf conifers - that they require less maintenance (watering, pruning and fertilizing) and are very easy to grow.

I am amazed at the amount of mis-

information that people tell me they have heard or read. I explain what the old-timers taught me, “When you plant them low, they never grow.” Planting in clay soils requires a good soil prep, then planting at, or a little higher than, ground level. We use hardwood bark mulch to aid in moisture retention and temperature control. When it decomposes, it amends the soil.

We stress the importance of regular and thorough watering. The last watering should be just before it gets cold. In central Ohio this is just about the time the turkey is going into the oven on Thanksgiving. I think it was Mark Twain who said, “Common sense ain’t so common”, and he was right. We have a few clients who think that “regular and thorough watering” doesn’t apply to their vacation time or irrigation systems!

Occasionally, when I travel to other nurseries, I get to see some new and exciting plants that are in production, but not yet released to the public. Call me old-fashioned, but I really believe that you have to grow a plant for several years before you really know how it is going to perform in your area. This is why I tend to use “tried and true” plants and save the newest selections for a little “pizzazz”, but never as the main anchors.

Finally, I will share some of my favorite “tried and true” (though not new

I tend to use “tried and true” plants and save the newest selections for a little “pizzazz”, but never as the main anchors.

to collectors), but under-used plants, along with a general description for my area. The description may vary in your area.

Pinus mugo ‘Valley Cushion’ (miniature Mugo pine): 2 inches new growth per year, small dark green needles, a tight 2-foot plant in 12 years that is an excellent performer.

Pinus sylvestris ‘Beuvronensis’ (dwarf globe Scotch pine): Nice globe shape. Requires little or no pruning, grows 4-5 inches per year, becomes a 3-4 foot rounded globe in 10-12 years.

Picea pungens ‘St. Mary’ (miniature globe blue spruce): A flat topped globe that grows about 2 inches per year, 2 feet in about 10 years.

Pinus parviflora ‘Bergman’ (Japanese white pine): An upright shrubby form with blue-green twisted needles, 4-6 inches growth per year, 4-5 feet in 10 years.

Pinus cembra ‘Silver Sheen’ (dwarf Swiss stone pine): Good blue-green needles, nice slow pyramidal growth, 4-6 inches per year, 4-5 feet in 10-12 years.

On my list of new and exciting plants are:

Picea abies ‘Perry’s Gold’ (Norway spruce): Lemon yellow new growth of 2-4 inches per year, appears to be a slow pyramid.

Metasequoia glyptostroboides ‘Gold Rush’ (Dawn redwood): Yellow needles mid to tip of branch, chartreuse colored needles where

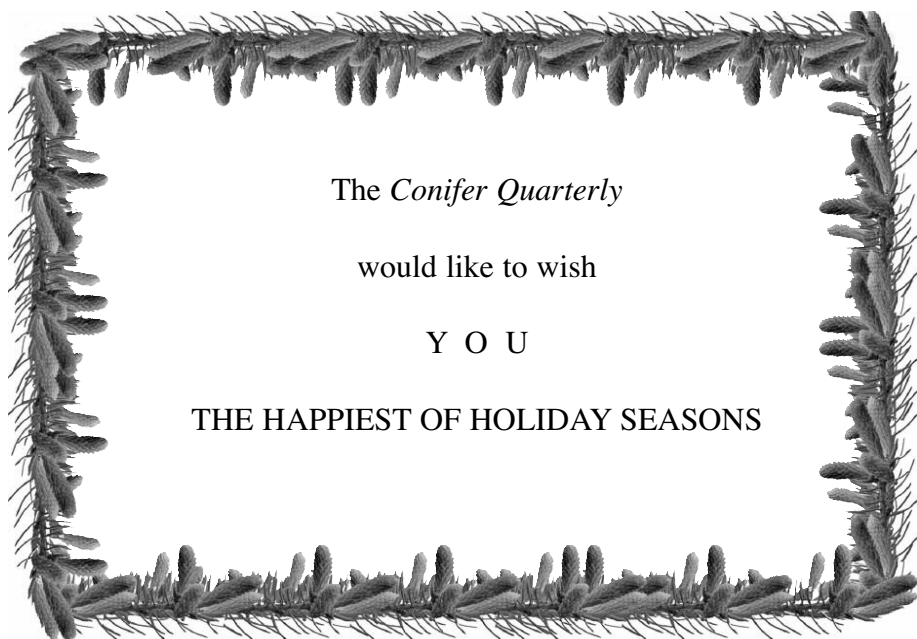
shaded, fast grower of 2-3 inches per year, a large tree.
Pinus bungeana 'Silver Ghost' (lace bark pine): One the finest barked trees! Not new to us, but recently named by Rich Larson of the Dawes Arboretum.

Ginkgo biloba 'Munchkin' (ginkgo) Dwarf habit 3 feet X 3 feet', small dime sized leaves, "tough as nails".

Pinus strobus 'Tiny Curls' (white pine): A dwarf selection of contorted white pine, after 5 years ours are just 2 feet high, a very nice plant.

Happy Gardening!

About the author: Dave Dannaer is an ACS member in Galena, Ohio. We asked him to share his knowledge of selecting and caring for plants.



Constructing a Southern Landscape with Conifers

Text and photos by Kimberly Karlin



In the summer of 1999, a small Holly-wood juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* 'Torulosa') was planted in the front of a yard filled with mature red oaks and simple fescue. With its upturned branches and deep green foliage, this young tree would soon start an evolution, if not a revolution, in the Karlin garden. A small step in the effort to beautify our property would, over the course of six years, lead to many, many, (did I say many?) conifers to follow.

The task at hand was to landscape our new property using something other than azaleas and magnolias, so common in southern landscapes. A *Cupressus arizonica* var. *glabra* was our next conifer acquisition. The door to the world of conifers had been opened, and my husband Jody and I were just peering in. That is, until Jody fell head first into the oblivion that is Addicted Conifer Syndrome.

Having a large strip of full sun area, we are able to try many conifer cultivars, balancing the dwarf bushy forms with taller, more open ones. A *Pinus thun-*

bergii 'Yatsabusa' soon joined the *Cupressus*. Jody and I developed favorites,

The task at hand was to landscape our new property using something other than azaleas and magnolias, so common in southern landscapes.

from among different genera, of course. He grew to love the *Chamaecyparis obtusas*, and I, the *Cedrus deodaras*. Both of us enjoy unusual varieties, particularly dwarfs. We liked the dwarfs because they look as if Gulliver could travel between them, and because you can pack so many of them into a small garden space.

We have learned some things along the way about using conifers here. For instance, that full sun in Oregon, where many of our trees originate, is morning sun in Conyers, Georgia. Yellow and variegated *Chamaecyparis* posed a challenge. Because they have less chlorophyll, thus less UV protection, a balance had to be struck to give these plants enough sun for them to keep the stunning gold color while not sun-scorching them. This necessity taught us that most conifers will grow as well in part shade. My favorite, the dwarf, whitish *Cedrus deodara* 'Snowsprite', does very well, and seems drought-tolerant now that it is established.

Drought conditions, daytime high temperatures in the 90's and nighttime

lows in the 70's, posed another challenge. We found that all of our trees needed to be watered frequently the first year they were planted. After that, they survive well except during extremely dry periods when it's back to frequent watering.

There are some genera having few species that survive, let alone thrive, here. *Abies* is a prime example. We currently have some *Abies koreana* 'Silberlocke' grafted onto the heat-tolerant *Abies firma* root-stock, and are hopeful for this newcomer. In Zone 7B, we have actually seen some conifers grow faster than their labels indicated, or than the growth we have heard could be expected for them within their native habitats. Others, well, "kill and learn" as Jody says.

We also had to deal with poor soil quality. Years of old growth oaks provided nutrient rich top soil; but hidden beneath, was the mineral-laden red clay

that challenges both plants and laundry detergents alike. A successful solution for us was the creation of raised beds. We have been successful using milled pine bark mulch (often augmented with mushroom compost), a slow-release fertilizer and, occasionally, a hint of mycorrhiza even when planting directly into the clay/soil mixture.

In 2001, our search for more unusual plants led us to involvement with the ACS. This added to our knowledge and, of course, our collection of plants. A collector's garden was born, and a trial garden was conceived. Since then, we have found and tried species that were either not well known or not commonly used in the southeast. The landscape of our own garden changed from areas planned for adult trees to beds arranged to show off varied colors and structures in a less-formal display. Weepers were planted near

uprights and prostrates by fastigiates to achieve contrast as well as to demonstrate the many different growth habits of conifers.

One of the most fun parts of gardening for us is finding the plants. We discovered that some of the large garden centers (not to be confused with nurseries), occasionally have jewels mislabeled, or worse, dying and on clearance. We sometimes find nice plants that were actually mislabeled for sale at a more than reasonable price. We look for the "ill" ones in the far back, in what we refer to as the "rehab section". Many of the ones we've bought were root-bound, and suffering from dehydration. Some had a broken branch or leader. Pruned, transplanted and watered, many of these finds have become wonderful trees in just a couple of years.

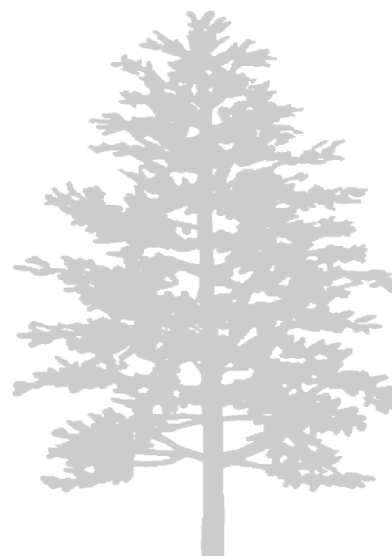
Conifers are under-used in Georgia because many gardeners do not know that so many of them can tolerate the heat and humidity here. We hope that more

gardeners will learn, as we did, that a unique landscape can be constructed with the myriad forms and colors available within the world of conifers with only property lines to limit them. We currently have over 1200 different species in our garden - a testament to the number of choices for a southern landscape. Good growing to you all!

About the author: Kimberly Karlin is a former labor and delivery nurse now assisting her husband with their nursery and aquarium business. She is a regular contributor and compiles our news column.



The Karlin's home after 6 years of landscaping with conifers



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On Puget Sound

Text and photos by Sharon Stanford

In November of 1999, Ed and I bought a 0.8 acre parcel of land overlooking Puget Sound near Olympia, Washington. It had been completely logged in the 80's, and as tends to be the case with bare ground in the Pacific Northwest, had become covered with small alders. When the previous owners put the property up for sale, they hired a bulldozer to push down all the alders and left them as three huge slash piles. There was no vegetation worthy of retention for a residential garden, only weeds and more weeds.



We had a vision for a house to go on this property and moved forward with construction. Then, in the spring of 2000 as construction was nearing completion, we turned our attention toward creating a landscape to surround our home. Though we had dabbled with gardening for many years, the size of this project was daunting. We didn't really know where to begin but knew that we needed help.

That's where our good friend Dave Baird, owner of Fairie Gardens in Tumwater, Washington came in. We had asked for his advice on our previous garden and were very pleased with those results, so the logical first step was to invite

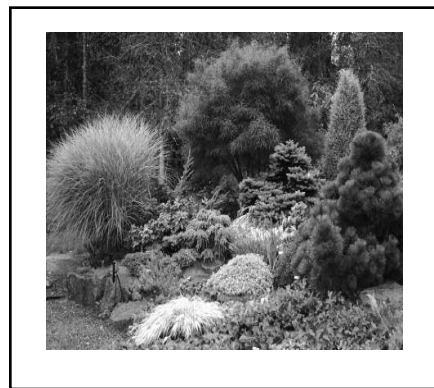
Though we had dabbled with gardening for many years, the size of this project was daunting.

him to take a look at this new project.

Dave's vision was to bring in granite boulders and create a rockery similar to that in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. He said he envisioned that a mix of perennials, small trees, and shrubs would be planted in this area. His vision included a mix of plants that would create a rich tapestry of color, texture, and form throughout the year without being dependent on bloom. Of course, the backbone would be based on conifers.

We liked Dave's overall vision, so he said the next step was to arrange for a day when we could meet him at the Safeway parking lot in Sandy, Oregon. We could then follow him to see his friend Don Howse. Little did we know that this was the first step on a journey that might one day require a 12- step program!

Six hours later, our heads were buzzing from the wealth of information that Don shared with us. Roughly 75 conifers were carefully stowed in the back of our mini-van and in the back of Dave's pick-up truck plus ribbons were



fluttering on 20 more specimens in Don's growing field, to be dug and moved when dormant. We were hooked.

From that day, our journey has led us on a quest to learn more about conifers and find more ways to integrate them into our landscape. Our quest for more knowledge led us to join the American Conifer Society and meet many wonderful people who are so willing to share their knowledge and love of conifers.

We have a sign on the wall of our garage. It says, "When does it become an Obsession?" We may be candidates for a 12-step program, but we aren't ready to go yet.

About the author: Sharon Stanford and her husband Ed are members of ACS.

"The intricate detail of creative design – That's why I love the conifers."

Edward Remsrola



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ACS National Meeting Knoxville, June 2006

A Westerner's Perspective

by Don Howse

The people of the Southeastern Region - specifically the folks in and around Knoxville - worked very hard and put together a superb 2006 National meeting. For those of you who were unable to attend, you missed a fine opportunity to see unique gardens, beautifully displayed plants, the beautiful Great Smoky Mountains, and the opportunity to share those sites with fellow conifer and plant enthusiasts. Mostly, you missed a very generous portion of southern hospitality.

We gathered at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Knoxville on Thursday afternoon, June 15. The hotel was conveniently located near the old historic district of Knoxville with many opportunities to enjoy good food and libations. Market square was only a couple of city blocks from the hotel where, during that first evening, free entertainment was being performed on an erected stage.

The Crowne Plaza was very comfortable and the staff did a fine job feeding us and attending to our needs. The hotel was a good choice for the meeting. As people arrived, we all pitched in and helped set up

the plants for the auction. Again, there were far more donations than the meeting planners had anticipated. The selection of unusual conifers was superb. They were all inventoried and labeled, then set on tables around the perimeter of the dining room. With lots of help, the work was much easier, and we all had a good time looking over and discussing the fine selection of conifers.

As evening arrived, we enjoyed the opportunity to renew old friendships and also make new ones. There were many new faces this year in attendance, and sadly, the absence of many who had attended previous years. Approximately 110 members and spouses attended this year's national meeting. After a nice light buffet dinner, we enjoyed the keynote presentation by Bob Fincham, of Eatonville, Washington. Bob had put together a PowerPoint presentation titled "The History of Conifer Cultivars since 1932". The program was about conifer collecting and the collectors in America during the twentieth century and up to present. This was a fine presentation recalling the many names we have heard about during each of the decades since the 1930's. He showed photos of individ-

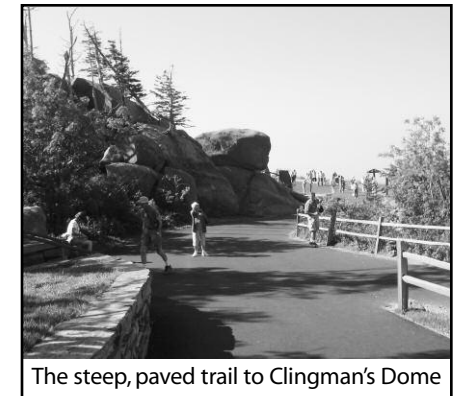
uals and also their collections, telling us many interesting stories to accompany the photos. He also employed recorded music during the presentation. This is a wonderful historic account of conifer collectors and collections during the past century which should be archived. Hopefully, it can be made available for educational purposes. Several members also presented short programs about their particular interests. Susan Martin's presentation about the Wollemi pine and its introduction into the United States generated much interest from the audience.

After breakfast the next morning, we all boarded coaches and headed for Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Upon entering the park, we stopped at Sugarlands Visitor Center where a volunteer docent came aboard each bus to act as a guide as we drove on up into the park. The highway climbed through rich forests of numerous deciduous trees and shrubs and some conifers. On the lower slopes, oaks and pines (*Quercus sp.* and *Pinus sp.*) are common. Among the pines are *Pinus echinata*, *Pinus pungens*, *Pinus rigida*, *Pinus strobus*, and *Pinus virginiana*. As we gained elevation, the pines were replaced by Canadian Hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*). These were tall and erect. Numerous deciduous species were growing among the pines and hemlocks. Some that we observed included *Magnolia fraseri*,

Carolina silverbell, sassafras, basswood, hickory, mountain maples, sugar maples, chestnut oak, sourwood, American beech, and yellow birch. At higher elevations, we observed flowering *Rhododendron catawbiens* along the roadside. This was a very diverse and rich forest.

Unfortunately, the hemlocks are being attacked and killed by the hemlock woolly adelgid which, as we know, has become a problem throughout much of the native hemlock forests in North America. Eventually, we entered the spruce-fir forest as we approached the spine of the mountain range. At Newfound Gap, with an elevation of 5,064 feet, we had broad vistas out over the forest lands of both Tennessee and North Carolina. Fir trees (*Abies fraseri*) had become apparent on the slopes. We continued to climb to Clingman's Dome at 6,643 feet elevation.

The coaches halted at the visitor parking area and let us all out. The



The steep, paved trail to Clingman's Dome

number of dead fir trees was astounding and we learned about the damage done by the imported balsam woolly adelgid. This insect has decimated the mature fir forests on these high mountain slopes. Young trees not affected by the adelgid were growing among the many dead trees - appearing like erect, silver-bleached skeletons. Unfortunately, the many smaller trees will become hosts to the adelgid. As the trees grow older, they will develop a rough bark where the adelgid can live, sucking the energy and life from the maturing trees.

We all hiked up the steep, paved trail to the watch tower erected at the summit of Clingman's Dome. From there we had terrific vistas and could appreciate the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains. The humid air in the lower valleys causes the "Smoky" effect, and the distance one can see is limited, even on clear, sunny days. The famed Appalachian Trail crossed our path at the summit, and some folks meandered short distances into the surrounding woods. Beside the fir (*Abies fraseri*), there were specimens of red spruce (*Picea rubens*) growing at this elevation. These trees represent the most southern extent of the range of *Picea rubens*.

After spending a couple of hours at this elevation in the bright sunshine and fresh air among the many other tourists, we reboarded our coaches and descended the park slopes to

Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Here we had a fine lunch at the Park Vista Hotel on a hilltop overlooking the city. After lunch, we returned to Knoxville and the Crowne Plaza Hotel, where we could rest and freshen up for the evening activities.

When I arrived in the dining room, the members had re-gathered for the social hour. With drinks in hand, they were milling about and marking the sheets for the items on the silent auction. The selection of plants was outstanding, and there was plenty for all. There was a nice selection of plants in the raffle, too, and tickets were being sold at this time. Prior to dinner, the members representing the Western Region made a PowerPoint presentation about next year's (2007) National Meeting in Washington State, near Seattle, and the planned post-conference bus tour to Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula.

The Silent Auction closed, and we sat down to a very nice served dinner. Following dinner, we were treated to a slide program by Don Shadow of Shadow Nursery in Winchester, Tennessee. He is renowned for his selections and collection of deciduous trees like dogwoods (*Cornus sp.*), maples (*Acer sp.*), redbuds (*Cercis sp.*), and many others. He has taken a keen interest in conifers, especially the forms of bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). He also has



The Gardens of Ruth and Bill Pardue

the finest and largest private collection of wild animals in a private reserve in the USA. Telling many humorous stories as he spoke extemporaneously, he delighted us with his humor, knowledge, and many fine photographs of his operation. We thoroughly enjoyed this presentation.

The evening ended with a lively verbal auction, with Ridge Goodwin serving as Grand Auctioneer. In his suave manner, Ridge did a fine job



The pond in Faye Beck's garden

and we raised nearly \$10,000 for the good works of the Society.

After another fine breakfast on Saturday, we all gathered for the Annual Business Meeting. Beside the usual details of financial reports and exchanging the gavel of leadership, we had the pleasure of learning of the recipients of the merit awards. As I know this information has been reported elsewhere, I will leave the details for your perusal there.

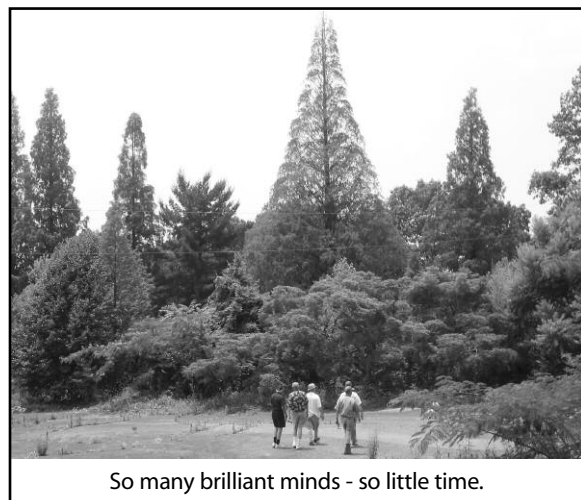
After the Annual Meeting, we again boarded our coaches and headed off for a full, hot day of garden inspection and fun. The two coaches went to separate gardens to begin with, and then exchanged places later in the morning. The Gardens of Ruth and Bill Pardue are

situated on a shady hillside, adjacent to a dense forest of southern deciduous trees. There is a grand display of water features, including waterfalls and koi ponds, set off with tons of rock work. The gardens surrounding their home, feature a broad array of plant material both herbaceous and woody, including many conifers. There is a nice display of trough gardens with conifers featured in them. Numerous hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis* vars.) were featured in the garden. It is a very nicely developed home garden, well worth the visit.

The other garden is much newer, being only a few years old. Faye Beck has done an outstanding job creating this complete garden in such a short time-span. Among the rock work and water features is an outstanding display of perennials, creating a riot of color. Prominent at the far corner of the garden is a superb

bright yellow specimen of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* 'Gold Rush' that caught the eye of every visitor as they came around the corner of the house. Trough gardens and a rock garden featuring miniature and dwarf conifers are nicely situated among the flowering perennials.

The two busloads of conifer enthusiasts re-gathered at the Knoxville Botanical Gardens and Arboretum. We were ushered into a stone-walled open greenhouse, where box lunches and refreshments awaited us. The host and docents told us about the history of Howell Nursery, and how the old nursery site has been recently acquired and was being renovated to become a premier new Botanical Garden and Arboretum. It is quite near to downtown Knoxville and has a grand history, having developed as a family nursery and farm along with the nearby city.



So many brilliant minds - so little time.

Although the garden is only a few years into development, we were all amazed at the work already accomplished. Stacked stone walls, and curious round stone buildings are featured at the site. The main house, which will become the offices of the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, is a beautiful structure by itself. Of course, the thing that inter-

ested us most was the assemblage of mature trees that had been part of the old nursery. Old specimens of *Cedrus libani*, and *Cedrus atlantica*, possibly seedlings, were in a line on the brow of a hill. Nearby was a fine specimen of *Abies nordmanniana*, also a probable seedling.

Among deteriorating old lath houses and greenhouses were a group of immense *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, the dawn redwood. One old tree was in decline, but seemed to be the largest and possibly the oldest in the group. It was speculated that the others may have been seedlings from the large specimen, as still smaller seedlings seemed to be growing in the jungle of weeds and vines. A very old form of *Picea abies* was growing nearby above a low wall. It may have been something like 'Clan-brassiliana', or a related dwarf form, that is now large and anything but dwarf. *Chamaecyparis obtusa* and also *Cryptomeria japonica* cultivars were found throughout the old collection of nursery stock. Being a fairly new enterprise, renovating this old nursery site is a monumental task, but the volunteers and dedicated staff are doing a fine job, are motivated and it will be worthwhile to return and see it as it develops.

After a short drive we arrived at the home of Alan Solomon. We trudged up a steep driveway and were very pleasantly surprised at the gar-

den that we found on a wooded ridge, with a sweeping view on one side toward the Tennessee River, and even the mountains in the distance. This is one of the finest gardens that I have seen created by an individual using one's own physical labor. Interconnecting pathways, lined with stacked stone walls led to terraces, glades and meadows with babbling brooks, seeping walls, water falls, pools, fountains, and unexpected garden art.

The artful detail in the garden is a testimony to a love of hard work and dedication to the unfinished product. Dr. Solomon and his wife Andrea Cartwright have every right to be immensely proud of what they have created. Conifers are included in the diverse mix of plants, which also contains many species of deciduous trees. The back slope and sunken gardens have a very tropical sense to them with lush foliage and flowering perennials. The garden is also an art gallery where many pieces of bronze, steel, and stone sculpture, some quite humorous, are permanently displayed. The use and reuse of falling water is significant to the garden and very pleasant. The amount of dry stone wall and walks is amazing, and Dr. Solomon has laid every single stone. As the afternoon became very warm and humid, we gathered on the porch of the house, and enjoyed the serenity of the site. It was a wonderful opportunity to relax, walk the trails and paths as we felt able, par-



The amount of dry stone wall and walks is amazing, and Dr. Solomon has laid every single stone.

take of their ample refreshments, and bask in true southern hospitality.

Our fifth and final stop for the day was at the University of Tennessee display and test gardens for plants to be used in mid-southern landscapes. Colorful beds of annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees greeted us as we entered the site. New displays of conifers have recently been added to the collection, and we took the time to help identify and correct some of the labeling. A tent had been erected where a superb dinner was being catered. While we enjoyed our

final repast together, a blue grass band played for us on the lawn.

I must say the folks of Knoxville were very warm and friendly, and made us feel truly welcome. Maud Henne and her committee did a fine job putting this meeting together, and the members of the Southeastern Region should be very proud of their accomplishment. I was so impressed I went out and bought a bottle of Southern Comfort, which I sip and recall the courteous and warm southern hospitality we all enjoyed.

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Conifer News

Compiled by Kimberly Karlin

ACS Celebrities

ACS past presidents Dennis Groh and Don Wild, along with Dr. Frank Telewski, Professor at Michigan State University and Jack Wikle were filmed at Hidden Lake Gardens discussing conifers and making suggestions for taking care of them. The segment was originally run late last year and has been rerun around the country on HGTV's *Rebecca's Garden*.

Early this year, while Dennis and Carole Groh were working in their yard, Dennis got a call on his cell phone from the local ABC television affiliate. They had heard about Dennis and Carole's Japanese maple collection and wanted to come out and take a look. The caller arrived shortly thereafter. From the other side of the car a man with a camera also appeared. Before Dennis knew it, he was wired for sound. And that is how he appeared on TV in his gardening best. The initial footage was shot in summer but the crew returned later to add the fabulous fall color of the maple collection to the previous footage which has aired around the country on HGTV's *Rebecca's Garden*.

The garden of Gary Whittenbaugh, ACS central region past president, was featured in an article "A Miniature Masterpiece" in *iowa-*

garden. The article discussed Gary's long-term passion for conifers and some of his conifer recommendations along with suggested companion plants.

More on Wollemi

A recent article "Coming to your Backyard: A Nearly Extinct Tree" by Bart Ziegler in the September 20 issue of the Wall Street Journal says, "The Wollemi pine is so ancient that it may have provided shade and sustenance to the dinosaurs." While the focus of the article is about finding rare plants for the garden, it features a color photo of the Wollemi in the wild and one in captivity and tells us that anyone can have one now from the exclusive U.S. retailer, National Geographic. The article also had a list of websites and catalogs offering rare and endangered plants.

Dwindling Population

The Miami Herald recently covered the dwindling population of the *Pinus elliottii* var. *densa* in Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys where development is quickly taking its toll on these trees. To counteract this, cones are being collected in

order to seed some natural areas as well for sale to the public.

Pine Seedlings in Uganda

The Monitor of Kampala, Uganda reported July 1 about a program organized to help communities begin private investing in commercial tree planting. In October 2005, 10,000 seedlings of *Pinus caribaea* were planted by the Muzira Society, one of the ten communities being supported by the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS). SPGS provides grants to commercial tree farmers and individuals. Over 200 members of the Society planted their own pieces of land with the pines, giving them a new option for income in addition to their other jobs.

More Insects

According to the website Timesleader.com, a diminutive insect that kills species of pine trees by boring holes in the wood has been found in Pennsylvania. The sirex wasp, found in Luzerne County and suspected in Bradford county, is moving south from New York State. The wasp impacts pitch pine, red pine and Scotch pine. Visit the website www.timesleader.com to find out more about this pest.

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Central Region

Gale and Deloris Folkerts hosted the 7th annual Iowa Rendezvous held in Reinbeck with 62 people in attendance. After a tasty lunch at the host garden, four other gardens and one arboretum were visited. Several new members were in attendance. In addition to Iowans, Chub Harper brought a group from Illinois. One couple came from Nebraska, another from Wisconsin.

Northeast Region

Over 100 people attended the Northeast Regional Meeting in September in Hartford, Connecticut. After drenching rains for most of the week before the meeting began, the skies cleared and presented the kind of weather tailor made for garden tours. Beautiful gardens, great hospitality and tasty food combined to make the meeting a roaring success. During a brief business meeting, the new regional president, Larry Nau, was installed. Dennis Dodge, winner of this year's ACS Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers, was presented with a commemorative gift.

Southeast Region

In addition to hosting the National Meeting in Knoxville in June, the Southeast Region members continue to give talks on conifers to Master Gardening groups. Knoxville ACS members also have done several presentations on conifers as has the Asheville group. Dave Gommel from Iseli Nursery gave a "Conifer 101" presentation on August 25. On November 9 the State Botanical Garden of Georgia will present an all day/all Conifer Symposium for their annual perennial conference. In a departure from the usual, this year's symposium will be devoted to conifers. This should be a great occasion to educate the gardening public on the use of conifers in the southeast (<http://www.uga.edu/~bot-garden/Events.html#special>).

Western Region

As hosts of the 2007 ACS National Meeting, the Western Region is getting ready for your visit next July. Have you marked your calendars yet?

A Dictionary of Conifer Shapes

Cascading - Generally a horizontal, weeping form, e.g., *Microcachrys tetragona*

Fastigate - Narrowly upright, columnar, probably won't become half as wide as tall, e.g., *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* 'Fastigiata'

Globose - Globe like in shape, can become as wide as tall or often times more broad than tall, e.g., *Picea orientalis* 'Bergman's Gem'

Pendulous - Weeping; will usually grow along or close to the ground unless staked. Many weeping plants

require staking to the desired height as their tendency is to creep e.g., *Pinus densiflora* 'Pendula'

Prostrate - Ground creeping habit, prostrate plants rarely exceed 3' in height *Juniperus daviruca* 'Expansa Variegata'

Pyramidal - Conical habit, typical of most conifers and some cultivars e.g., *Cedrus deodara* 'Deep Cove'

Spreading - Horizontal branching, plant will usually be twice as wide as tall at maturity. Term usually used for plants that are larger than 3' high e.g., *Picea*



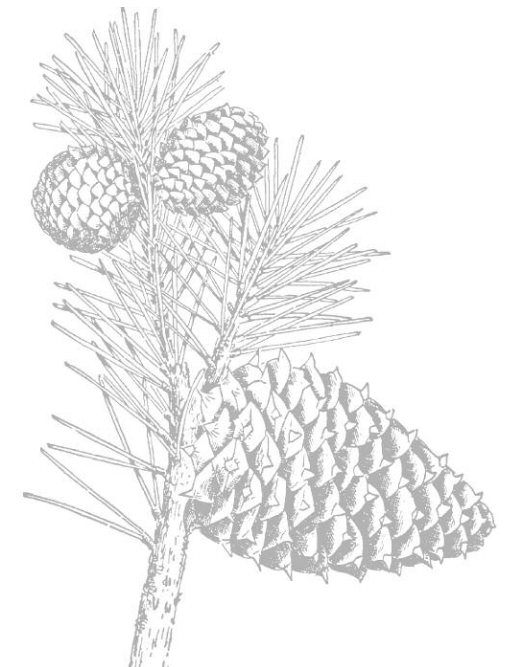
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East Meets West – The Conifer Artistry of Man and Nature

Leading up to our 2007 National Meeting in Seattle, Washington, the next several issues of the *Conifer Quarterly* will feature some of the gardens that will be on tour. The purpose in this is to heighten your awareness of how special this event will be.

In this first installment, we will acquaint you with the Kubota Garden.

The history of Kubota Garden started in 1927 when Fujitaro Kubota purchased five acres of swampland and began a garden. Like many members of ACS, Mr. Kubota was one of those self-taught

gardeners who had a dream. He wanted to display the beauty of the Northwest in a Japanese manner and was soon designing and installing gardens throughout the Seattle area. As his landscaping business prospered, the garden was expanded to its current size of 20 acres. For many years the family's garden was a center for social and cultural activities for the Japanese community in Seattle.

The garden was abandoned for four years while the Kubota family suffered internment at Camp Minidoka in Idaho during World War II. After the war,

Fujitaro and his sons, Tak and Tom, rebuilt the landscape business and began extensive plantings of nursery stock. Many of these nursery areas are still present today. In the sixties, Fujitaro placed over 400 tons of stone to create the Mountainside which features waterfalls, reflection pools, carved stones and the plants he had worked with throughout his life.

Eventually, the property became a target for condominium developers. With encouragement from community groups, the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board designated the 4.5-acre core area of the garden as a Historical Landmark of the City of Seattle.

In 1987, the City of Seattle acquired the garden from the Kubota family.

Featured conifers include:

- Pseudotsuga menziesii* 'Pendula' - weeping Douglas fir
- Abies grandis* - grand fir
- Abies lasiocarpa* - Alpine fir
- Abies procera* - Noble fir
- Pseudolarix amabilis* - golden larch
- Pinus strobus* 'Pendula' - weeping eastern white pine
- Pinus densiflora* 'Pendula' - weeping Japanese red pine
- Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera' - table top Japanese red pine
- Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula' - weeping Atlas cedar
- Athrotaxis cupressoides* - Tasmanian cedar
- Picea abies* 'Inversa' - Norway spruce

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Kubota Garden in Seattle, WA.

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