



Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 30 No. 4
Fall 2013



Mt. Ranier Forest. *Pseudotsuga menziesii* and *Tsuga heterophylla*.
Photo by Michael Kauffmann

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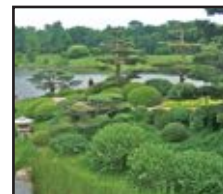
Dianne Fincham



*Pseudotsuga
macrocarpa
Angelus Oaks*



*An artfully pruned
Japanese black pine*



Chicago Botanic



The purposes of the American Conifer Society are the development, conservation, and propagation of conifers, with an emphasis on those that are dwarf or unusual, standardization of nomenclature, and education of the public.

Conifer Quarterly

Fall 2013
Volume 30, No 4

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You are invited to join our Society. Please address membership and other inquiries to the American Conifer Society National Office, PO Box 1583, Minneapolis, MN 55311. Membership: US & Canada \$38, International \$58 (indiv.), \$30 (institutional), \$50 (sustaining), \$100 (corporate business) and \$130 (patron). If you are moving, please notify the National Office 4 weeks in advance.

All editorial and advertising matters should be sent to: Ron Elardo, 5749 Hunter Ct., Adrian, MI 49221-2471, (517) 902-7230 or email conifereditor@yahoo.com

Editor
Ronald J. Elardo

Technical Editors
Jerry Belanger
Steven Courtney
Robert Fincham
Ethan Johnson
R. William Thomas

Advisory Committee
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Note: Hardiness Zone references in the *Conifer Quarterly* are USDA classifications unless otherwise specified.

Frank Goodhart and Walter Cullerton led ACS members on a fabulous three-day journey through the Hudson River Valley for our annual ACS National Meeting. For the 191 ACS members who joined us, it was a fabulous excursion through private estates, public gardens and was complemented with informative speakers. For some, an additional 4 days was needed to explore even more gardens, estates, and superb cuisine. Melanie Wyler did a superb job in organizing our post tour. In addition to Frank, Walter and Melanie, dozens of additional ACS members were involved in the planning and executing of our events in New York – thank you to each of you who stepped forward and made these events such a success.

For most attendees the highlight of our national meetings is our auctions and the plants which are available to bid on. I know in the NE region we do our best to thank each one of our donors. Let me publicly thank each donor, whether it was one plant or twenty, who contributed to the ACS auctions. Each year hundreds of conifers, plus other companion plants, are donated to our National and Regional auctions. Without these donations, followed by the spirited bidding of our members, the ACS would not have the resources to carry out its mission. This year we had one of our best auctions ever with over \$17,000 generated.

For the past six months Ethan Johnson has led a search committee for applicants for our national office position. The Board of Directors was presented with three extremely qualified candidates in August. After hours of executive session meetings, follow up emails, and a two hour phone conference, the BOD has selected Steven Courtney as the next ACS National Office Manager. The ACS was extremely fortunate to have the option of three viable candidates for this position. Thank you to each of you for applying.

Steven Courtney is certainly well-known in the Central Region. He has served as the Central Region's Director for the past four years, as well as the Central Region's Treasurer. Steve's most recent position was as Manager of Hidden Lakes Gardens in Michigan; a position he held for the past seven years. Many of you will remember last year's National Meeting and the day we spent at the Harper Collection, which was planned and coordinated in part by Steve. It will take several months to complete the transition of the National Office from North Carolina to its new home in Minnesota. By the time this *Conifer Quarterly* reaches you, this move will almost be complete, and Steve will likely be responding to your questions and queries.

Working with Steve, I already signed the contract to implement Neon CRM as our office software per the BOD's instructions. This program will simplify the management of our membership list, produce mailing lists, and process our credit cards, and e-checks, to name a few tasks it will accomplish. Just about the time this *CQ* arrives, the ability for the ACS to take new memberships and renewals via the website should have been activated. In addition, donations may be made to the various ACS endowments, purchases such as the CCOY trees may be made, and a secure membership list will now be available to each member on line; which will be updated each day!

I realize not all of our membership will welcome these changes. We will still use the tried and true US Postal Service and create a paper membership list for those who are more comfortable with this option. I do want to make a direct appeal to our membership to help us utilize your email if you have one. At this point we have just over 1,000 email addresses for our roughly 1,650 members. I have used email to send out reminders as your President, and the vast majority of our regional newsletters are delivered by email. Think how much time, postage and paper you can help the ACS save by providing your email. Please think green and make sure you are up to date with all the ACS offers!

I hope many of you have taken the opportunity to explore and participate in our new website. At this point we have over 275 ACS members registered. Sean Callahan has written over 14 news stories, with over 135 photos of

conifers and ACS members. We have over 28 active discussions going, with over 130 comments; many with photos of conifers. In addition, over 100 new photos have been added to the ACS Conifer Database by ACS members. All of this activity in the first 40 days; we are off to a great start. By definition we are a Society and, with that term, we are defined as being *social*. Not everyone can attend and participate in national or regional meetings. However, each of you grows conifers, and many of you have instructive conifer gardening experiences, outstanding conifer specimens, and quality conifer gardens. I asked each of you to share these with not only your fellow members, but the greater community as well. The most important aspect of the ACS' mission is education. Join us in educating the cyber gardening public via the World Wide Web about the splendor of conifers at www.conifersociety.org. Along the way, I am confident additional conifers will be planted, and more people will want to join our community of the American Conifer Society.

Thank you for your ACS membership.

Larry Nau

ACS President



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John Grimshaw, a gardening botanist:There has been nothing like it in scope before and it is difficult to imagine such a work ever being produced again - on paper, at least..."

Chris Reynolds, curator of Bedgebury National Pinetum:The wealth of detail and information is truly astonishing. The authors are to be commended on their efforts and I would advise all serious gardeners and landscapers to get a copy: it will be well worth it..."

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Dianne Fincham

By Bob Fincham

You will not see her picture among the early officers and directors of the ACS. Nor is she pictured with any photographs of the founding and charter members. But few people played a more important role in getting the American Conifer Society established as a viable organization during its early years. Dianne Fincham operated behind the scenes, providing me with much needed support when we were in our “start-up mode”. By the second issue of the *Bulletin*, she took a more visible role when she assumed the editorship of the *Bulletin*. I was getting swamped with too many projects, and she took on the role to help me and the Society. Since getting this Society established was important to me, it also became important to her.



Dianne

She was always active in supporting the Society in public and private ways. Eventually we found other editors, but, during a later span when no one would take on the position, once again she took it. She always set high standards for herself and for the *Bulletin*. She spent an inordinate amount of time on the publication, and both times her position as editor was voluntary. There may have been a slight stipend the second time, but it was still essentially a volunteer task.

She supported my efforts during my first five years as president of the Society and continued to support my Society-related efforts ever since. Most people, however, got to know her through her work at Coenosium Gardens and got to know her welcoming voice over the phone when placing orders or discussing plants. She greatly enjoyed working with customers and got involved with the business when she discovered how many really nice people were involved in conifer collecting. She always looked forward to meetings and mixing with conifer lovers while getting to see some of our customers face-to-face.

After her battle with cancer, her stamina restricted her ability to attend ACS meetings, and her last annual meeting was the 2008 meeting in Iowa,

where she renewed many acquaintances. In 2013 she was proud to be cancer free for seven years and looking forward to her seventieth birthday. I had retired from teaching in June, 2012, and we were enjoying our extra time together and planned many future trips. She was even looking forward to proofreading my second book on conifers.

If you did not know Dianne personally, unfortunately you will no longer have that opportunity since she suddenly passed away on June 18, 2013 of a brain aneurism. I was at her side and lost my soul partner of forty-four years, who was also my business partner and a driving force behind many of my achievements in a span of twenty-five hours. She did not suffer and I doubt that she realized she was dying since she spent the whole time in a coma.

We were phasing out the Coenosium Gardens, retail business and were planning on another two years of retail mail order sales, gradually moving into wholesale mail order. I will decide how to proceed this fall. Losing my partner has been such a shock that right now I am unable to make that decision.

When those of you who have a plant from Coenosium gardens look at it, please give a brief thought to Dianne Fincham. That way she will still be present in this world as a memory. She was an organ donor and her remains were cremated and spread in the Puget Sound, where they will diffuse and eventually become part of the Pacific Ocean, waiting for mine to join them at some future date.

Conifer Love

Charlotte and Ian met in 2007 at a national conifer conference and post tour in Seattle. Charlotte accompanied me, her mother, Dr. Marilyn Grist, on this trip in hopes to spend quality time. Ian accompanied his parents, Jim and Barbara Smith of Blue Sterling Nursery. Charlotte and Ian were married May 24, 2013 in Seattle, Washington. Family and friends celebrated with the newlyweds at a garden party at the home of Dr. Marilyn Grist in Travelers Rest, South Carolina, and a pool party in Bridgeport, New Jersey.

Congratulations and best wishes to Charlotte and Ian Smith!



Charlotte and Ian Smith

A Tale of Two Conifers

By Dr. John W. Abbuhl - Founder, Pine Hollow Arboretum

The Pine Hollow Arboretum was chartered by the New York State Education Department Board of Regents in 2007. I first began to landscape my personal property in 1966. My landscaping philosophy was to allow the property to speak through its inherent composition and character, to determine what would best enhance its appeal. Acquiring adjacent land in 1976 provided a substantial contiguous forest landscape. This made it possible actually to envision an arboretum. The concept of regionalizing material from geographic areas of the world eliminated random plantings without conceptual structure. This vision has guided the Arboretum's development over the past 36 years, during which time there have been over 3,300 plantings.



The property, located in Slingerlands, New York, has 80' thick clay sediment from the bottom of glacial Lake Albany, which is punctuated by ridges of loamy, more alkaline soil. Once an abandoned agricultural property, the landscape evolved into an Eastern White Pine forest. Other naturally occurring species included *Alnus* spp. (alder), *Cornus racemosa* (red panicle dogwood), *Cornus obliqua* (narrow-leaf dogwood), *Viburnum lentago* (nannyberry viburnum), *Viburnum dentatum* (arrowwood viburnum), *Viburnum trilobum* (high bush cranberry), and *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* (green ash), as well as *Cornus florida* (hardy dogwood).

The most significant alteration to the landscape was the construction of twelve ponds over twenty years in low, seasonally wet areas. Without the creation of any dams, soil was spread into flat fields and small hillocks, enhancing the natural topography. These ponds created clearly defined areas around which to place plantings.

The Arboretum's collection has concentrated on fir, spruce, pine, arborvitae, false cypress, deciduous conifer and magnolia species of diverse origins. The concept of regionalizing plantings allows the visitors to travel the forest ecosystems of the world, while simultaneously appreciating our local native flora. In addition to the establishment of foreign and unique tree specimens, we have focused on maintaining and enhancing the Arboretum's native plant community with the use of regional plants. Furthermore, special emphasis is placed on encouraging an environment, in which plants



Dr Abbuhl next to *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*



Chamaecyparis lawsoniana and *Chamaecyparis thyoides* 'Glauca'

can benefit from ecological cycles, such as decomposition and nutrient flow in order to develop robustly and with significant lifespans.

Among the many unique specimens at the Pine Hollow Arboretum, there are two complimentary conifers which might be of special interest



Close up of difference in color.

to lovers of evergreens. Both were planted circa 1970, and are examples of the two remaining genetically true North American false cypress species: the east coast *Chamaecyparis thyoides* (Atlantic white cedar), and the west coast *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (Port Orford cedar).

The *Chamaecyparis thyoides* 'Glauca' specimen was obtained from the Weston Nursery in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, from stock originating within that region. In

comparison to others of the same origin in our collection, this specimen has grown more rapidly and more broadly. Even after losing half of its height from a Christmas ice storm, it has formed new top growth with an even broader spread of delicate, lacy, blue-tinged foliage. As testament to its vigor and viability, it has even produced a 15' offspring on an adjacent eastern white pine nurse log.

The *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* specimen was obtained from a nursery in Georgia and sent by mail in an envelope! Ignorance was bliss. It has prospered, and is now 35' tall and 11" in trunk-diameter with compact dense growth which displays a slightly golden tip on new growth. Despite the success of this individual, my attempts to secure additional specimens of *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* had always been met by failure in the first winter.



White pine nurse log

After one particularly cold winter, I made an interesting observation regarding another foreign false cypress specimen in the Arboretum's collection, *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Crippsii' (golden Hinoki cypress). I observed that any foliage, which was not completely yellow, died, leaving only 20% of the foliage alive. A bell rang in my head: "Is the yellow foliage in the false cypress hardier than the green?" To help answer my question, I ordered *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Golden Showers' from Forestfarm nursery in Williams, Oregon. This specimen has had no winter die-back. It appears that perhaps the slight gold tip of new growth on my original *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* signaled a hardier gene. The propagation of hardy specimens of this species outside of its native environment could be helpful in the long-term preservation of such an important tree.

These two unique specimens of the North American false cypress species growing together are a pleasure for all conifer lovers to behold. We hope that the Pine Hollow Arboretum environment will be able to preserve them into an indefinite future. If you would like to arrange an opportunity to see these specimens and to tour the Arboretum, please contact us at 518-439-6472.

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(One of) My Favorite Conifer(s)

By Dan Spear

Those of you living in Conifer Country, enjoying your spruce, fir, and hemlock, may feel bad and give pity to the few of us coniferites living in Southern California, but we have a very special tree which is only found here in the hot, dry mountains of Southern California. Bigcone Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*), unlike its well known cousin Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), which grows on both sides of the mountains, at times in virtual rain forests; bigcone grows in the steep, rocky, dry mountainsides of Southern California, in forests which average 30" of rain per year, and, in drier years, as little as 10" of rain per year. People living outside of Southern California have a hard time comprehending just how dry our climate is. The rule of thumb for gardeners is this: if it is not irrigated, it will not survive. The mountains where bigcone Douglas-fir thrive go without rain for nine or ten months of the year, with summer temperatures in the mid to high 90's, and relative humidity in the single digits. Now that's dry.

Bigcone Douglas-fir has been known by many common names, which include false hemlock (Sargent 1884), desert fir (Jepson 1910), bigcone Douglas-fir (Abrams 1923), bigcone spruce (Munz 1959), and others. It is now officially listed as bigcone Douglas-fir. It has also been listed under



Bigcone Douglas-fir cones



Pseudotsuga macrocarpa Angelus Oaks

several botanical names, such as *Abies douglasii* var. *macrocarpa* ‘Torrey’ (Ives 1861), *Tsuga macrocarpa* ‘Lemmon’ (Lemmon 1875), and *Pseudotsuga Douglasii* var. *macrocarpa* ‘Englemann’ (Watson 1880).

Bigcone Douglas-fir is a beautiful, stately tree, with older specimens exceeding heights of 80’. It is immediately recognizable by its unique architecture, with its long branches jutting out wide and parallel to the ground; similar to the yards of the tall ships which sailed up the coast of California by Richard Henry Dana in the 1830’s. The short, soft needles contrast nicely with the massive horizontal branches. Bigcone-Douglas-fir may live up to 700 years. “Old Glory” near Mount Baldy Village was recognized

as one of the largest at 145’ high and 91” in diameter before it lost its top in a windstorm in the 1950’s. The female cones measure up to 7” long, about twice the length of Douglas-fir.

Bigcone Douglas-fir is found in the San Rafael Mountains, the Traverse Ranges of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, while it is scarcer in the Peninsular Ranges. There were reports that it was also growing further south in Baja California, Mexico, but those have proven false. The majority of bigcone Douglas-fir are found in the Angeles National Forest of the San Gabriel Mountains, which borders Los Angeles to the north, giving bigcone Douglas-fir a north-south range of approximately 315 miles.

Let me introduce you to a bigcone Douglas-fir expert, Jennifer Hooper.



Pseudotsuga macrocarpa
Angelus Oaks seedling

Jen is with the U.S. Forest Service in the Angeles National Forest. I ran into her recently in the Chilao area of the Angeles National Forest where she has been conducting an experiment with bigcone Douglas-fir. She has 5,000 seedlings, about half of which will be planted in December to take advantage of the wetter winter weather, when nearly all of the rain and snow arrives; and the other 2,500 or so seedlings will be planted in April, more of a typical spring planting based on Northern California climatic conditions, as the silviculture of the National Forest in California calls for. She has also been testing seedlings in pots prior to planting where half will be subjected to higher temperatures and diminished water to see if they improve their survivability after planting. In addition to planting time and treatment of seedlings in pots, she has different planting sites selected, based on amount of shade/sun to determine what is optimal. She will then determine the growth rate and survival rate of each group, after about five years, but thinks it may take up to 20 years to get concrete conclusions. (Like so many of us, she has lost six-year-old trees when drought and high temperatures arrived.)

Bigcone Douglas-fir was selected as the test species primarily because it is a Management Indicator Species for the Angeles National Forest. Obviously, it is very drought tolerant, and it regenerates after fire better than any conifer in this forest. The proverbial straw which broke the camel's back, the deciding factor, was that there are only enough seeds in their grower's seed bank for conservation, not for reforestation. Jen has great concern about the decline of bigcone Douglas-fir and believes its status is Threatened, even though it is not officially listed as such. Bigcone Douglas-fir reproduces when the ground has been scarified, usually by fire. The problem is, after 50+ years



Station Fire survivor

of fire suppression in California, the forest fires are now super fires, not small chaparral burners, given the enormous fuel loads. The fires destroy the trees (and the soil) instead of giving them a chance to reproduce. Given the decline of the species, its beauty, and drought tolerance, I am surprised it is not planted more frequently, both in the forest after fires, and in cultivation.

Bigcone Douglas-fir would seem to make a wonderful street tree or park tree given its low water needs, and the attraction many have for planting California native plants. Jen is under the impression one would need both federal and state permits to collect seeds. Sadly, bigcone Douglas-fir is not common with the growers and retailers most of us usually turn to for that unique conifer species or cultivar. I have found it at Las Pilitas Nursery, a grower of all types of California native plants (www.laspilitas.com) in the Central Coast town of Santa Margarita. Bigcone Douglas-fir lives in temperatures which range from 10° to 100° F, and is said to survive as low as -10° (though Las Pilitas Nursery warns against it). In the home garden, you can expect it grow to 10-15' in ten years. I have just purchased two one-gallon seedlings. One will go in a pot, the other in the ground. We'll see how they do.



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Return To Rochester

By Gerald Kral

In 2014, the Northeast Region (NER) of the American Conifer Society will hold its annual regional meeting on September 19-21 at the Holiday Inn, Rochester, NY. This article is the first of a series the NER will be submitting on the 2014 venues to the website. Each gardener has been asked to write an article about his or her garden and explore in much more detail the botanical and landscape delights awaiting your visit. The author has estimated that these venues will offer the opportunity to observe over 600 conifer cultivars, including dozens of unusual *Ginkgo*.

The NER of the American Conifer Society visited Rochester, New York, in 2004, and people are still talking about it. Ten years later, Rochester again



Driving down Pinetum Road in Highland Park. *Photo: Karen Kral*



A nice vignette of one of Jerry's many rock gardens. *Photo by Karen Kral*



A vista of the Kral's front yard and house. *Photo by Karen Kral*

welcomes the NER to our beautiful city. And, once again, Elmer Dustman and Jerry Kral have teamed up to plan and organize the meeting so that attendees can expect the best in food, accommodations, garden venues and buying opportunities.

Rochester boasts the name “Flower City” for good reason. Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park in NYC, designed 4 parks for Monroe County and Rochester; Genesee Valley Park, Highland Park, Seneca Park and Maplewood Park. The internationally famous Lilac Festival showcases a world-class lilac collection in Highland Park during May. The Maplewood Rose Gardens hold a mid-June rose festival. At the turn of the 19th century, Rochester was the world’s largest importer and distributor of plants from Europe.

We will visit Highland Park’s Pinetum. This is an old pinetum featuring over 300 species and varieties of conifers. Dozens of these conifers are well over a hundred years old. See what a 90 year-old mugo pine (spp.) looks like. Olmsted was entranced by the rolling topography left by glacial outwash and by how much it resembled many Alpine regions in Europe. Olmsted purposely designed Highland to look like a sub-alpine ecosystem. Certain vantage points totally remove views of the urban surroundings, and, for a moment, you can imagine you are in some picturesque Alpine valley.

Jerry and Karen Kral will once again welcome the ACS to their gardens. The gardens are now 22 years old. See how Jerry has handled the 10-year horizon twice over. Adjoining land acquisitions have expanded the gardens to almost an acre (41,000 Sq. Ft.) within the city of Rochester. Unique statuary, sitting areas and over a half mile of stone path take you into a botanical world of whimsy, fantasy and rare plants. Jerry’s emphasis is always on the aesthetic. Conifers are displayed within complex vignettes of plants and hardscapes. Over 300 conifer and *Ginkgo* cultivars blend with hundreds of annuals, perennials, shrubs and rare deciduous trees.

Brooke Henninger’s garden proves that you don’t need a lot of space to grow conifers and to present them in an attractive way. The 10,000 sq. ft. gardens combine hardscape and water features to showcase the more than 150 conifers

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A vista of Brooke's front yard.
Photo by Elmer Dustman

Brooke has collected. A Hinoki (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) hedge, planted and lovingly pruned by her aunt, inspired Brooke's fondness for conifers. Brooke admits to having a serious case of Addicted Conifer Syndrome and is eager to share her passion for conifers with the rest of us.

Mert Bohonos's garden is unique in that his passion is bonsai. A



Picea glauca
'Pendula' at attention in
Brooke's backyard.
Photo by Elmer Dustman

An artfully pruned Japanese black pine in the landscape.
Photo by Mert Bohonos



Mert's display bench of his bonsai specimens.
Photo by Mert Bohonos

20-year student of William Valavanis (editor of the quarterly *International BONSAI* and home for the International Bonsai Arboretum), Bohonos has translated bonsai technique into his landscape. See how basic bonsai techniques can be used to enhance even a mundane conifer (or any tree) and turn it into a unique specimen. The beds are beautifully maintained and feature many unusual conifer specimens. A large display bench features an extensive collection of Bohonos's bonsai creations.

We will visit and have lunch at the estate of David and Bonnie Swinford.



The Swinford house with a vista
of the grand terrace.
Photo by Elmer Dustman



A close-up of the base
of the grand terrace.
Photo by Elmer Dustman

The house, an Italian Renaissance mansion, was a prohibition-era, roaring 20's edifice designed for entertaining. It features a secret wine vault, indoor pool and a large terrace overlooking the grounds. In 1941, Fletcher Steele designed and built long walls and an intimate garden to one side of the house. They bought the property in 2001, but, due to extensive work on the house, only began work on the gardens in 2008. David thinks small and big at the same time and has 3 acres to work with. Most conifers are of specimen quality, including the artfully displayed miniatures. Enjoy a superb lunch under a tent, and let the views of the grounds and house transport you back to an earlier, grander age.

Publication Dates

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Calendar Quarter</u>	<u>Deadline to submit articles</u>	<u>Publication Date (approx.mailing)</u>
Spring	Apr/May/June	Feb 15	Apr 30
Summer	Jul/Aug/Sept	May 15	July 31
Fall	Oct/Nov/Dec 31	Aug 15	Oct 31
Winter	Jan/Feb/Mar	Nov 22	Jan 31

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Editor's Corner - The Hudson River Valley--- the 2013 ACS National Meeting



For a native-born New Yorker, quaint landscapes, rock-walled homes, greens of all hues made it seem like home. Mt. Kisco and its environs greeted the 191 attendees to the national meeting. And, what a greeting it was!

Westchester and Dutchess counties provided very different venues for us coniferites. There was much to see and learn. The attendees broke into different touring groups to visit the gardens on the program. The group, in which I was a member, visited the Quaker Hill Native Plant Garden. It is an

engineering feat; created waterfalls and rock paths and mature transplanted trees greet the visitor. It does contain naturally occurring wildflowers as a forsetage to the conifers, 23 species in number. It is a place of wonderment which is only belied by the cabled trees, which may take 10 to 15 years to root in their adopted surroundings. This place was well worth seeing.

After leaving Quaker Hill, my group headed for the Rosen House of Caramoor for lunch. In the estate house, one would find a museum adorned to mimic “a grand Italian palazzo”, filled with the art and furnishings collected



Mammoth Pool at Quaker Hill
Photo by Sean Callahan



Picea orientalis
'Skylands'
forest.
Photo by
Dennis Groh



Acer
palmatum
trail.
Photo by
Dennis Groh

and purchased from European villas and palaces and Asian reliquaries. Then it was on to the Steinhart Garden. The 55-acre estate boasts 2,000 species of trees, shrubs and perennials. The rolling grounds were impressive. The conifer garden was pleasant. There was also a large Japanese maple garden with 400 cultivars. The conifer and Japanese maple gardens were spatially separated. Of interest was the oddity of having exotic animals on the grounds. It's not every day that one finds camels in the back yard.



Cone on *Sciadopitys verticillata*
Photo by Dennis Groh

On the second day of touring, we visited the Larned Garden in North Stamford, Connecticut. Michael and Beazie Larned chose property for their home and gardens which was blessed with natural rock outcroppings. In this setting, grotto-like, as if in a valley, pocket gardens abound. The alpine/conifer rock garden, the perennial and butterfly gardens, along with the mature wildflower meadow enjoy the natural backdrop of a surrounding woodland. I particularly



Pinus wallachiana 'Zebrina'
Photo by Dennis Groh



Bascobel Restoration view of the Hudson Valley
Photo by Dennis Groh

loved the vegetable garden in what appears to be the deepest point in the garden. Its manmade and palatal borders created a one-of-kind garden.

The educational speakers and programs were both entertaining and educational. The meeting's keynote speaker, Peter Del Tredici of the Arnold Arboretum, turned the botanical world so-to-speak on its needle. In his presentation, "The Emergent Forests of the Future", Peter basically called the invasives of today the natives of tomorrow. He demonstrated the migratory movement of trees, for example from the southern states to New England. Climatic changes, human activity and economics agitate this migration in an undeniably major way.

The next day members of the Barlett Tree Research Laboratories expanded upon this theme. Neil Hendrickson taught us about invasive and



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native pests. Once again, climatic and human intervention have resulted in affecting the cycle of beneficial insects peaking after the destructive ones do. The obvious result is the accelerated death of trees from species of invasive, maleficent insects. Neil posited the notion that the health of the soil is the best way to mollify the environmental factor and thus insure better tree survivability.

Greg Paige, Arboretum Curator at Bartlette-Charlotte, dovetailed into the best health for trees by discussing choosing “the right tree for the right place”. Greg demonstrated the correct planting of trees, even bare-rooted trees which in trials grow and survive if properly planted and cared for. Balled and burlapped trees need special preparation before planting too. Bindings and burlap coverings need to be removed so that the tree’s circulatory and root systems can develop properly and nourish the plant. Greg called for planting tough plants for tough conditions.


At the evening of the first day, Dr. Art Tucker donned academic robes and a wig to provide comic relief after Peter Del Tredici’s redefinition of invasive species. Dr. Tucker, aka Linnaeus, tried to tackle the pronunciation of “his” botanical names. It would be an amazing feat were it not for the multiplicity of pronunciation possibilities used by plant people. The short of it is that Linnaeus himself would be confused if he were to drop in on a conifer meeting.

The auctions were fun and a bit wild. Two, to remain-unnamed coniferites (you know who you are), paid \$1,200 and \$1,400 for single trees. Plants on tables and tables found their ways to new homes. I even hovered over a *Cryptomeria japonica* ‘Cristata’ in order to win the day. The can-action netted \$700, and the auctions total garnered \$17,000. What a haul! Then there was all that camaraderie as befits the convention of conifer people.

To say the least, the Mt. Kisco meeting was a real treat. See you next year in Atlanta.

Ron

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2013 ACS Scholarship Awarded

By Gerald Kral

The American Conifer Society is pleased to announce the \$2,500 ACS Scholarship has been awarded to Lauren Axford. Axford's sponsor is John W. Abbuhl of Pine Hollow Arboretum (Singerlands, NY). Axford is currently enrolled in the State University of New York - Empire State College. She is completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Agro-Environmental Science. In 2006, Axford obtained a three-year collegiate degree from McGill University in Quebec where she studied Farm Management and Technology.

The interims between her academic endeavors were spent gaining knowledge in plant propagation and ecological restoration. Axford worked as an Administrative Horticulturalist with the New York City Department of Parks, Natural Resource Group (NRG). Axford began her employment with NRG's Greenbelt Native Plant Center (GNPC) in 2006. The Greenbelt Native Plant Center (GNPC) is a vast nursery and seed bank complex focusing on providing locally sourced native plants and guidance for restoration projects in the NYC metro area.

Axford was hired to start a new program for the GNPC. Her task was to develop technical expertise in all areas relevant to native seed production, including native meadow establishment and maintenance. This allowed Axford to hone her skills as a producer of a niche crop, acquire knowledge of plant conservation practices, provide technical expertise used in the commercial native seed production in the Mid-Atlantic region, and to enrich and restore disturbed habitats in the NYC metro area.

Axford and her family relocated to upstate New York after the birth of her daughter in 2012. She immediately began work as a consultant with Pine Hollow Arboretum. She assists in the development of educational materials and promoting the Arboretum's visibility within the community. She is busily helping the arboretum plan future projects such as; establishing a native meadow on the property for wildlife habitat, propagation of the Arboretum's most cherished conifer specimens, and implementing



Lauren Axford

preventative measures to control Emerald Ash Borer in *Fraxinus spp.*

Starting next semester, Axford will be working on an independent study course with Professor Linda Jones of Empire State College, an expert in forest ecology. The ACS scholarship funding will be used to purchase relevant texts and necessary materials for collecting and germinating seeds and testing various grafting techniques on Pine Hollow's most notable conifer species. Certain conifer specimens in the Arboretum exhibit exceptional hardiness and are at the most northern part of their range. Included in Axford's project will be *Calocedrus decurrens*, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (one of two specimens to be featured in this ACS *Conifer Quarterly* article now 35' tall and 11" in trunk-diameter and the only specimen of many attempts to survive the Arboretum's winters), *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Kitayama', and *Picea sitchensis* 'Compacta',

Axford will also use some of the scholarship funds to prepare a report and write an exclusive article for the ACS *Conifer Quarterly* on the results of her research. Conifers showing provenance to the outer limits of hardiness are rare and show great promise in introducing some excellent cultivars to more northern conifer enthusiasts. Testing for the best methods of propagation is good science and good for the green trade.

The ACS Scholarship has a rich, ten-year history of providing exceptional young scholars with the opportunity to experience original research, participate in unusual study programs, and publish in the ACS *Conifer Quarterly*. Axford continues this tradition.



Note: More information about the ACS Scholarship may be found on the ACS website. It is an annual award of \$2,500. Application forms, eligibility, and other information can be downloaded from the site. More information is always available by contacting Gerald Kral at 900 N. Winton Rd., Rochester, NY 14609, or at gkral1@rochester.rr.com.



Editor's Note:

The photo shown on p. 19 of the Summer 2013 issue is not in the Klondike Valley. It was incorrectly included in the Klondike photos. It is a photo of a section of the Iseli Nursery.

Central Region Meeting in Schaumburg, Illinois

By Jerry Belanger

It's impossible to please everyone, but the 2013 ACS Central Region Annual Meeting came tantalizingly close: people who dislike long bus rides were pleased; those who like events to run on schedule were pleased; all of us who appreciate conifers were very pleased... and there was even something for those who enjoy Disneyland.

It all started with Friday night's speaker on a topic which almost guarantees that not everyone will be pleased: climate change. Professor (and ACS member) Glenn Herold not only acknowledged that impediment, but also admitted that at first he wasn't very excited about the topic himself—specifically, the effects of Midwestern climate change on conifers.

Nevertheless, his sprightly presentation of weather and climate data and the results of studies specific to conifers was well-received. Graphics showing how

USDA plant zones have changed over the years, and charts tracking the length of the growing season in Midwestern locations drew nods of agreement from many gardeners.

Temperature and precipitation patterns are not the only concerns, he said. Plant diseases and insects also play a role. In addition, “weather events” such as storms, floods and fires have increased.

Studies have shown that the dramatic increase in CO₂ levels in the past hundred years does not accelerate the growth of conifers as might be expected. A Japanese study of 25 conifer species suggested that 80 percent of them could lose more than half of their habitat area by the end of the century.



Professor Glenn Herold



The Lee Garden



He noted that many of our native conifers such as white pine, jack pine and hemlock, are especially sensitive to atmospheric pollution, and that while CO₂ emissions have been declining in the US since the 1990s, they have been increasing in places like China.

Our descendants a hundred years from now will still have conifers, he opined, but they probably won't be the ones we're growing today.

On Saturday, attendees toured three unusual private gardens. While each one was unique, all three had oriental design elements, which, in itself, is unusual for a Midwestern garden tour.

Joe and Soon Lee designed a garden patterned on those in their native South Korea. The *Pinus densiflora* and *Pinus sylvestris*, meticulously pruned in the oriental manner, were accompanied by other oriental plants adapted to Midwestern growing conditions: Korean and Japanese maples, Korean firs, azaleas and of course, *Hosta*. The rocks and water essential to such gardens were also in evidence, and striking.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wormser's expansive garden has oriental aspects — and much, much more. The real grabber is Ed's extensive collection of garden sculptures, which ranges from classical nudes to science fiction monsters, dinosaurs to elephants. Among the trees is a massive-boled willow just

bursting with character. Among the oriental features: Chinese philosopher's stones, or *gongshi*, naturally eroded rocks (from China) with amazing configurations.



The Wormser Garden



Altogether, this garden is definitely one-of-a-kind!

The third garden, owned by Nicole Williams and Larry Becker, was anticipated because it was originally designed by noted landscaper Jens Jensen when the house was built in 1902. More than a hundred years later that basic design remains, and has been expanded, with additional features including a Japanese garden and teahouse.



The Becker Garden

The final stop was the justifiably famous Chicago Botanic Garden, but what can we say about that in this space? With dozens of named gardens, from Aquatic, Bulb, and Circle to the breathtaking Waterfall Garden, what could we see in a mere two hours? Naturally, most coniferites opted for the new Dwarf Conifer Garden, the Bonsai Collection, and the Japanese Garden, which was outstanding by any measure.

One aspect of niwaki, the Japanese style of pruning, is *midoritsumi*, or candle plucking. The staff spent 570 hours this spring tending the 172 pines in this garden. And there's more to do! ("Too much work!" more than one conifer addict scoffed, indicating that they'd stick with miniature and dwarf varieties which don't require pruning.)

Back at the hotel, the silent plant auction got underway before dinner, with more than five-dozen trees (and a few other items) to bid on. As usual,



Chicago Botanic Garden



The Japanese Garden at Chicago Botanic Garden



The Japanese Garden at Chicago Botanic Garden

good-natured rivalry was rampant. Some very nice conifers went to new homes and a good bit of change went into the ACS coffers.

The event ended with the live auction and the coffee can raffle (which became a bowl raffle because somehow, the traditional coffee cans had disappeared).

Shortly after 9 p.m., auctioneer Bill Barger drew the last raffle ticket. The winning number was — *his!*

That provided a rollicking finale to a rollicking weekend.

See you next year in Wadsworth, Ohio.

Ginkgo biloba 'Jehosophat' purchased at Central Region Meeting and planted in a container. Photo by Ron Elardo



Creating a Sun Screen for Sun-Sensitive Conifers

By Dave Stegmaier

The summer sun in my Zone 5 Shawnee, Kansas, garden can be unrelenting, and is sometimes too much for the more tender specimens, such as *Picea orientalis* 'Skylands', especially before they become acclimated. I sited my 'Skylands' so that it would receive sun



*Picea
orientalis*
'Skylands'

year-round, which it needs to stay that desirable golden color. However, during the hottest weather, I like to protect the southwest side of it to keep it from burning. If you have conifers—or other plants—which you'd like to protect from the hot summer sun, you can make a simple sunscreen from shade cloth you can easily put up and take down as needed.

Materials:

- ◆ 60/40 shade cloth, which is sold by many nurseries and online. It is generally 4' wide and sold by the foot. Buy what you think you'll need to cover your plant. I bought enough to make two 8' x 3' panels.
- ◆ ½" EMT (electrical metallic tubing) – the conduit used by electricians to run wiring. I used three 10' lengths as I made a two-part screen. (If you want to make a three-part screen, get four lengths.)
- ◆ ¾" EMT – three one-foot lengths for sleeves to support the ½" conduit. Flatten on one end to make them easy to drive into the ground.
- ◆ Hex head screws and Cable ties

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Tools:

- ◆ Battery pack drill
- ◆ Hex head driver
- ◆ Hammer to flatten end of $\frac{3}{4}$ " conduit
- ◆ Center Punch

Construction:

Center punch the $\frac{1}{2}$ " conduit on 1' centers for hex head screw placement. Lay the three lengths of $\frac{1}{2}$ " conduit on the ground approximately 3' apart and lay the shade cloth on top, leaving 1' of conduit bare at one end. Attach the cloth with cable ties (overlapping at the middle using the hex head screws on all three vertical lengths of conduit). Gently pound the three pieces of $\frac{3}{4}$ " conduit (the 'sleeves') into the ground—it's easiest if you have help with the placement—and slide the $\frac{1}{2}$ " conduit into the sleeves.



Creating the sunscreen



The screen with cable tie eyelets.

I put the screen up in mid-June and remove it on cloudy days or when I'm having company, and of course for fall, winter and spring. It's very easy to lift the panels out of the sleeves and roll them up for storage.

My 'Skylands' no longer burns in the hot summer sun!

You will notice in one photo that I added an additional panel for added protection.



Sun Screen around
Picea orientalis
'Skylands'



Sun-screened conifers in my garden.

2014 Collectors Conifer of the Year

By Dennis Lee

Beware conifer enthusiasts who can't resist a prominent plant, our 9th year of the CCOY program is featuring two selections which readily draw attention to themselves. One causes you to be in awe of its heavy cone production while the other is having you wonder how such a silvery blaze can be produced. They are both significantly cold hardy, but not adaptable for the deep south of the USA. In regards to texture, one has a soft, shaggy, pyramidal appearance and the other has a curly, stiff, rounded, flattened look. Warning: They both may cause severe symptoms of "conifer addiction"

***Pinus x schwerinii* 'Wiethorst'**: Schwerin pine is an interspecies hybrid of our Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Himalayan white pine (*Pinus wallichiana*). It inherited the cold hardiness of the one native parent while inheriting the longer needle length of the Asian one. It was first known in a park near Berlin, Germany, in 1905. In the 1980's, a witch's broom was found on such a hybrid by a Mr. Wieting of Gieelhorst, Germany. Although many brooms have dwarf growth characteristics, 'Wiethorst' is an intermediate form. On poorer sites it may produce 3" to 6" of new growth; while under better conditions it may easily produce 6" to 8" of growth. If garden space is a concern, this cultivar still has excellent potential for incorporation since it readily responds to candle pruning. The new growth on pines is referred to as candles when it is in the elongation stage. If they are pinched, pruned, or sheared back at this time, the new growth will produce typical needles and additional buds along the shortened stub, but the stub itself will no longer elongate. This will greatly reduce the growth rate and also create a very compact, shaggy



Pinus x schwerinii 'Wiethorst'

appearing 'Wiethorst'. Even with plenty of garden space, many conifer enthusiasts desire this look for a unique textural effect, especially with the added feature of an overabundance of ornamental cones.

The amazing, heavy cone production and interesting cone presentation are other attributes of 'Wiethorst'. Small, stiff, first-year cones are prominently displayed in an outward manner on short stalks. Whereas, second year, gray-green cones are curved and have highlighted scales which impart a braided design. Grouped in clusters and nestled close to the foliage, they point downward. At a certain maturity, they begin to exude flows of gooey resin with a not so surprisingly aromatic, pine fragrance. Deeper into the foliage, some open, third-year brown cones may still dangle. As for the foliage, the greenish-blue, streaked with silver needles of a vigorous 'Weithorst' may exceed 9" in length. Because they are thin, they are easily influenced by a breeze to sway back and forth.



Pinus x schwerinii cones

If a 'Wiethorst' is left to develop on its own, it will assume a somewhat open, informal structure with billowy branches. In 10 years, it most likely will be about 6' to 7' tall and 5' to 6' wide. If routinely candled, it can be half to a third that size, especially in height. 'Wiethorst' performs well in USDA Zone 4 through 7 and in sites which are sunny to part shade.

This 'Wiethorst' offering is grafted onto high altitude limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*). This understock is considered more reliable and hardier than others. Limber pine roots prefer a well-drained soil which is acidic to neutral. Once established, limber pine roots are tolerant of dry conditions.

***Abies koreana* 'Ice Breaker':** This Korean fir witch's broom was found on an *Abies koreana* 'Silberlocke' by Jorg Kohout of Germany sometime during the first decade of this millennium. It is a stunning dwarf which flashes brilliant, shiny silver. Such a show arises from the needles tightly curling upward to reveal their remarkable, silvery-white undersides. Because this broom is so naturally dense and compact, the concentrated mass of curved foliage totally illuminates a garden spot and demands to be noticed.

'Ice Breaker' typically pushes 1" to 2" of orderly growth per year. In 10 years, a low, flattened specimen about 1' high and about 1' 6" to 2' wide can be expected. As the plant becomes more mature, it has been known to throw

a sporadic growth which may look out of place because it appears to be springing up. If it occurs more in the center of the plant, many owners have left it and found that it settles down into another tier of compact horizontal growth, which over time and repetition could produce a more pyramidal plant. Such growth is not only likely with age, but could also occur when the plant has been encouraged through optimum levels of fertilizer and watering. Although 'Ice Breaker' is not noted for needing pruning, it responds very well to such when it is desired to maintain or create a certain sized or shaped plant.

As for cone production, it hasn't yet been observed for this new introduction. In general, many dwarf witch's brooms are not known to set cones.

'Ice Breaker' performs well in sunny to partially shaded sites which occur in USDA Zones 5 through 7. Our offering is grafted onto *Abies koreana* understock, which is considered to be adaptable to a wide range of site conditions and which also produces an excellent root system. In general, Korean fir does best in a well-drained, moisture-retentive soil which is mildly acidic.



Abies koreana 'Ice Breaker' with red begonias

Ordering: The Collectors Conifer of the Year program is restricted to active members of the American Conifer Society. Purchases are limited to one of each selection per member. The cost for 'Wiethorst' is \$75.00 and the cost for 'Ice Breaker' is \$95.00. 'Wiethorst' comes with a conditional one year/one time replacement

guarantee. Our inventory of 'Ice Breaker' is limited and our final number will not be known until shipping season. Replacements will not be available. Consequently, we can only guarantee that 'Ice Breaker' will arrive in a healthy state, or a refund will be provided. Accompanying each plant will be an anodized aluminum tag with its holder which identifies the plant as a winner of the American Conifer Society's annual award of "Collectors Conifer of the Year". Shipping is included in the above costs. For ordering,



Abies koreana 'Ice Breaker' foliage

please complete the form in this publication. Orders will be filled by date of receipt until inventory sells out. All orders must be received by February 1, 2014. We cannot ship outside the United States.

Happy *conifering* to all of you!

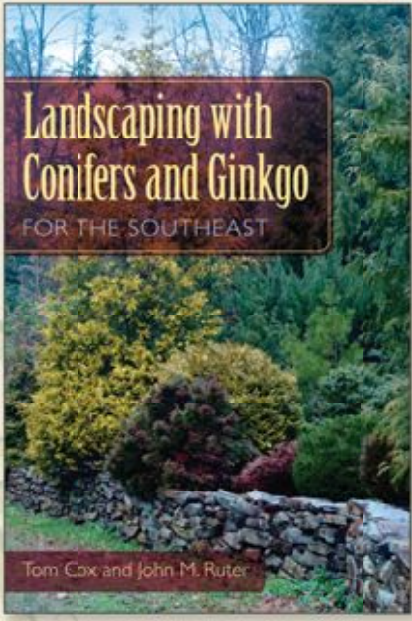
Dennis Lee

Note: 'Ice Breaker' may also be referred to as 'Kohouts Ice Breaker'®.

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ACS Award Winners

Dennis Groh was awarded the Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award for Dedicated Support of the American Conifer Society at the 2013 National Meeting in Mt. Kisco.

Dennis Groh is a Life Member of the American Conifer Society. He has served as a national officer, holding the positions of Past President, President, Vice President - Treasurer, as well as positions in the Central Region organization. When asked, Dennis has also been an eagle-eye advisor to the Board of Directors for the Society's investment portfolio.

Dennis served as the Co-Chair of the 2012 National Meeting in Michigan (the largest ever), as well as the Chair of the inaugural Conifer College 2012.

Dennis is a member of the Harper Collection Steering Committee, which oversees the Harper Collection of Dwarf and Rare Conifers at Hidden Lake Gardens.

Dennis was one of the champions and the chief fundraiser for *People & Plants: The Harper Collection of Dwarf and Rare Conifers*.

Dennis is a Master Gardener and is always willing to share his knowledge of all kinds of plants, most especially conifers and Japanese maples. Dennis has planted thousands of plants in his gardens, moved many of them multiple times and has had to expand into his neighbor's yard to fulfill his Addicted Conifer Syndrome (ACS). If you were to ask Susie Eyre, she might tell you he is up there on the ACS's highest level with the likes of Chub Harper, Gary Gee and Rich Eyre.

Dennis is a constant learner of conifers. He stays abreast of the newest information and available research on these plants. Above all, he is a humble, approachable supporter of others who are interested in conifers. Dennis is always one of the first ACS members to introduce himself to new members at meetings. He is also among the first to espouse the benefits of being a member of the American Conifer Society.

In view of his past and current leadership and contributions to the ACS, Dennis Groh is most deserving of recognition by being awarded this accolade.

Steven Courtney and Dr. Ronald J. Elardo



Dennis Groh
Photo by Sean Callahan.

Kurt Wittboldt-Müller received the Justin C. “Chub” Harper Award for Development in the Field of Conifers in Mt. Kisco.

Kurt Wittboldt-Müller is an ACS member, whom Frank Goodhart re-nominated for the above award. Since he worked and lived in Europe, his accomplishments have been overlooked. His two books are in German; hence they are not widely read. His work on cross pollination of firs and his development of new *Sciadopitys verticillata* cultivars should not be overlooked or taken for granted.



Kurt Wittboldt-Müller on the right. Photo is by Maud Henne.

Editor’s note. Recently I received a letter passed on to Susan Martin by Kurt after he had been notified of receiving the Chub Harper award. Kurt was surprised and very gratified to have been recognized for his decades-long research and propagation efforts “to do the best for nature by concentrating the spirit and the heart on finding conifers with more stability and more resistance – and this job is an adventure”. He was especially happy that his efforts have not gone for nothing, but rather that they are appreciated internationally. He thanks the ACS and “[m]any friends in different countries [who] accompanied [him] on this path.” Kurt is very thankful for the honor in recognition of his many efforts.

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Staff & Volunteers

National Office Manager

Steven W. Courtney, American Conifer Society, PO Box 1583,
Maple Grove, MN 55311 PH (763)657-7251
Email: acsnationaloffice@gmail.com

Conifer Quarterly Editor

Dr. Ronald J. Elardo, 5749 Hunter Ct, Adrian, MI 49221-2471
PH (517) 902-7230, E-mail: conifereditor@yahoo.com

Web Editor

Sean Callahan, 34 Wildberry Ln, Brunswick, ME 04011
PH (207) 729-4806, E-mail: webeditor@conifersociety.org

Collectors Conifer Chairman

Dennis Lee, PO Box 1332, Stow, OH 44224
PH (330) 688-4283, E-mail: coniferden@msn.com

Seed Exchange Chairman

Jim Brackman, Old Highway 410 SW, Olympia, WA 98512
PH (253) 736-5864, E-mail: james.brackman@weyerhaeuser.com

Conifer Registrar

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Newark, OH 43056 PH (800) 443-2937,
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Taxodium distichum 'Pendens' (bald cypress) in the Harper Collection at Hidden Lake Gardens with *Sassafras albidum* (sassafras) leaf in fall color.
Photo by Dennis Groh.



American Conifer Society
2014 Collectors Conifer of the Year Order Form

The Collectors Conifer of the Year program is restricted to active members of the American Conifer Society. Purchase is limited to one of each selection per member.

Please complete the other side of the order form, include your check or credit card information, and return to the National Office in the enclosed envelope.

Plants will be shipped in Spring 2014 and will arrive in their own shipping containers via pre-paid ground delivery to the shipping address you have indicated (no PO Box numbers).

The Conifers of the Year, *Pinus x schwerinii* 'Wiethorst' carries a conditional one year / one time replacement guarantee. The Conifer of the Year *Abies koreana* 'Ice Breaker' carries a refund guarantee should it not arrive in good condition.

All plants will be accompanied by an anodized aluminum tag with its holder that will permanently identify the plant as the winner of the American Conifer Society's annual award of "Collectors Conifer of the Year".

Since there are limited numbers of each plant being produced for the program, orders will be filled in order of receipt until inventory sells out. All orders must be received by February 1, 2014.

Detailed care and planting instructions will accompany each plant.

American Conifer Society
PO Box 1583
Maple Grove, MN 55311
www.conifersociety.org

Billing & Shipping Information

American Conifer Society
2014 Collectors Conifer of the Year

Where should we ship your plant(s)?

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Email

Pinus x schwerinii 'Wiethorst'

No. 1 container

\$75

Abies koreana 'Ice Breaker'

No. 1 container

\$95

Total \$ _____

Please make payment payable to American Conifer Society. US dollars only.

Check Money Order Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

Cardholder Name

Billing Address

Account No.

Expiration Date

Amount Charged

Security Code

All orders must be received by February 1, 2014.

Packaging and Shipping cost is included in the prices above.

All orders to ship Spring 2014, exact date to be determined by shipper.