

# Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 22 No. 4

Fall 2005



An operator checks the position of the tree spade before removing this large *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis*. Read about the short ride to its new home on page 6.



Gary Schultdt



Anne Brennan

This bog garden was just one of many unexpected treasures the national meeting attendees saw at Chanticleer in Wayne, Pennsylvania, this August. A brief meeting review begins on page 38.

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*Cover photo: Cupressus arizonica 'Blue Ice' by the pool at Chanticleer in Wayne, Pennsylvania, one of this summer's national meeting tour destinations. Photo by Anne Brennan.*

# Conifer Quarterly

Fall 2005  
Volume 22, No. 4

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Editorial and advertising matters should be sent to the Editor: Anne Brennan, 145 Cedar St., Jenkintown, PA 19046.

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Anne Brennan

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DON WILD

Fall is here, and the meeting season is winding down with only the Western Regional Meeting still in the offing on November 5th.

The National Meeting and post tour was a roaring success thanks to a supreme effort on the part of Barbara Smith and Ridge Goodwin. The first tour day took us to Swarthmore College – an absolutely beautiful campus in the Philadelphia area. The campus *is* essentially the Scott Arboretum.

Over the past several years as Harriet and I have traveled, we've frequently taken time to visit campuses in areas we pass through. Few are as elaborate as the Swarthmore/Scott combination, but most campuses have an assortment of trees not seen in most landscapes.

Most colleges had a botany department at one time and, as a result, individuals with a special interest in plants and trees were part of these institutions. Whether they exist in a named arboretum or simply "on campus," the specimens are frequently spectacular, if not necessarily conifers. Most memorable for me are the huge old *Sciadopitys* (umbrella-pine) found on New England campuses. I recommend that the next time you are near a college campus, stop and stroll across the grounds – there are always surprises.

After the Scott Arboretum, the National Meeting attendees next visited Chanticleer, which is a charming former estate situated in the rolling Pennsylvania landscape. Last, we visited the Grounds for Sculpture which demon-

strated the use of conifers to accentuate or demonstrate outdoor sculpture. If not for my involvement in the ACS, I might never have visited either of these sites, and I wish to thank Barbara and Ridge for their selection of tour sites. For those who were not at the meeting, I would encourage you to visit these gardens when you are in the Philadelphia area.

The meeting ended with a fine dinner that included a selection of wines specially labeled for our event, all of which was provided by Jim and Barbara Smith of Blue Sterling Nursery and Ridge and Jo Ann Goodwin.

The *Conifer Quarterly* and the National Meeting are the cornerstones of a membership in the ACS. Our publication continues to improve under the direction of our editor, Anne Brennan. While the cost to produce the *Conifer Quarterly* varies from issue to issue depending on the amount of color in each publication, the cost has risen only slightly in the last few years.

There has, however, been concern over the expense of the meetings as the actual cost increases from year to year. While the meetings may seem expensive at first, many members realize it is actually a bargain when one considers all that is included in the registration price. The food, transportation, and facilities make up all but a small portion of the expense. If you attend a local lecture sponsored by a neighborhood nursery, you often pay \$30-40 for a one-hour lecture. We have members at the national and regional meetings that rival any expert on the horticultural lecture circuit.

Not only are these experts present but they are readily accessible. So if you really want to learn about conifers, our meetings are the place to be.

Your Board continues to strive to make the meetings interesting and educational while controlling costs as best we can. It is my hope that we continue the recent trend of offering local, one-day "rendezvous" meetings as well.

The information about the 2006 National Meeting in Knoxville is now available on the Society's web page. Make your plans now!

The Conifer Society's Scholarship was a promising new program that began last year but unfortunately did not receive any applications. The Board therefore voted to add last year's funds to this year's scholarship, raising the scholarship's value to \$1000. Please check the website for details.

Hidden Lake Gardens and the ACS gained some national exposure recently when the "Rebecca's Garden" TV Show came to HLG and filmed a short segment about the Harper Collection. Keep watching your TV listings for this program to air in November or December.





Patience is a virtue when establishing a new conifer garden.

Ideally, one creates a planting plan that takes into account the mature sizes of the trees and shrubs, and the plants are installed accordingly. William Zinkham describes this approach on page 36, and readers will appreciate the way the individual conifers and the overall design will develop over time as residents watch and enjoy the process.

Others of us do not always allow for trees' eventual sizes in our landscapes, so we must make a few adjustments as time passes. This creative rearrangement is part of the fun for some people (including me), though it requires a lot

more effort than the "plan, then plant" method. Beginning on page 6, Gary Schuldt shows what a tree spade and crew can accomplish in short order once a decision is made to move a large, established conifer. If you've never seen a tree spade in action, these pictures may give you a few ideas!

Even if both you and your conifers are content with the plants' positions, you will probably want to share your successes with friends and neighbors. When cones appear on your favorite tree, the urge to collect seeds for propagation is hard to resist. Maybe one or more seedlings will possess characteristics that are similar to or better than the parent plant. Pete Jones has recently fallen under this spell as several *Pinus parviflora* cultivars in his collection produced cones, and Pete describes his strategy for us on page 10.

**Beyond our gardens' gates**

The striking beauty of Mother Nature's conifer gardens is another theme of this *Conifer Quarterly*. Tom and Evelyn Cox recently traveled to the Pacific Northwest, as did Jordan and Bennett Jack on a separate and very different trip. Both couples, who hail from the Southeastern U.S., were impressed by the expanses of native conifers that thrive in the opposite corner of our country. On page 28, Tom explores the geologic conditions that have created this coniferous carpet, while Jordan shares some of the highlights of his trip beginning on page 32. Don't forget that our 2007 National Meeting will be based in Seattle and Olympia, Washington!

Next year's national meeting, to be held June 15-17 in and around Knox-

ville, Tennessee, is gaining lots of momentum and interest due to its proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains. Here is another example of a region whose natural flora stops visitors from other areas in their tracks. ACS Southeastern Region president Maud Henne begins to familiarize us with the tour itinerary on page 42 and will continue in the Winter issue.

Until then, don't forget to enjoy the conifers in your own backyard (literally and figuratively) this autumn.

*Anne*

**Publication Dates**

Issue	Calendar Quarter	Deadline to submit articles	Publication Date (approx. mailing)
Winter	Jan/Feb/Mar	Nov 7	Jan 15
Spring	Apr/May/June	Feb 6	Apr 15
Summer	Jul/Aug/Sept	May 10	July 15
Fall	Oct/Nov/Dec 31	Aug 12	Oct 15

**Submit articles/photos to:**

Anne Brennan, Conifer Quarterly Editor  
 145 Cedar St., Jenkintown, PA 19046 • PH (215) 376-0231  
 FAX (215) 827-5926 • E-mail: ConiferQuarterly@contextcomm.com

**Next issue:**

**Keeping Track of Your Conifer Collection**

Twenty years from now, how will you remember when or where you found your favorite garden conifers? If you collect and propagate witches brooms or other unusual forms, what records do you keep so you don't forget the story behind each plant? Share your ideas or horror stories by submitting a short article on or before November 7th.

**Plus – An 8-page color section to show off your favorite conifers!**

Last winter, we invited readers to send photos of their favorite gold and variegated conifers for our bonus color pages. This year, we are letting you decide what you'd like to share with our members. Maybe it's a plant you named and propagated, or one that creates the focal point of your garden? When visitors tour your garden, what don't you want them to miss? Our readers love to see how your garden grows.

# Changing Places: Relocating Large Conifers with a Tree Spade

While there are definite advantages to planting small conifers and patiently watching them grow, some of us decide to transplant larger specimens that require some help from the professionals.

Gary Schuldt in Olympia, Washington, decided to relocate a *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis* (formerly *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) from the garden's front edge to its interior for screening purposes and to eliminate crowding by nearby plants.

Gary shared these photos with the *Conifer Quarterly* and reports that the tree is adjusting well in its new location.

Here's reassurance that it's never too late to change your garden plan!

— Anne Brennan



Before moving day, the weeping Alaska-cedar is crowded by nearby plants with little room to grow.



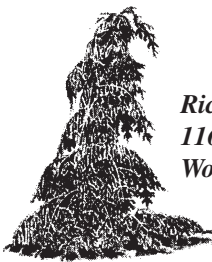
All photos by Gary Schuldt

A large tree spade is required for a specimen of this size.



Careful alignment is required to center the tree and preserve as many roots as possible.

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Just a short ride away waits an identical hole, carved out by the tree spade before the tree was lifted.



The tree looks right at home in its new planting hole once the spade is removed. Gary reports that an unpleasant view of a greenhouse beyond the garden has been largely eliminated.



All photos by Gary Schuidt

## Hand Digging Trees: An Art and a Science

Marty Brooks and his Rare Plant Nursery in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, are synonymous with large specimen conifers. His customers are willing to pay a premium for hand-

dug trees, so Marty was the perfect commentator for the ball-and-burlap demo held at Blue Sterling Nursery in Bridgeton, New Jersey, during the 2005 National Meeting.



Marty Brooks (above) explains each step to meeting attendees, from initial digging techniques to final tying off of the rope.



The tree is ready to move to its new location in no time flat. Careful attention to proper tying helps to insure a safe trip.



All photos by Anne Brennan

# Collecting *Pinus Parviflora* Seeds

by Peter C. Jones

*Seed production by a cherished plant calls for a different approach to propagation*

Watching seeds develop on the trees in one's own garden is truly a joy, especially when a choice plant is involved. Such was the case for me this year when *Pinus parviflora* 'Zuisho' produced cones.

Many years ago, my dear friend and mentor Jules Koetsch gave me a 'Zuisho' that he had purchased in Japan. Along with Bill Merritt, Dave Damboic and Bill Daly, Jules has long encouraged me to pursue my interest in propagation

of choice and unique plants for Bonsai training. Having a chance to propagate this prized cultivar was a thrilling opportunity that doesn't come along often. Since this tree was not getting adequate light and was declining in health in Jules' yard, he told me it was mine if I could save it. Jules only asked that I propagate 'Zuisho' so that other club members can grow and train it.

In my opinion, *Pinus parviflora* 'Zuisho' is one of the best pines for training as a Bonsai, and at the time that I took possession of this tree, plants were not readily available.

So my first concern was to get this tree healthy. Every day I prayed the tree would live. As the tree's health improved, I was able to graft it to Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii*) and trade scion wood with Dennis Dodge of Bethlehem Nursery in Connecticut. Many of the grafts were in fact successful, but when I saw seed cones developing on the original plant, I began to take a new approach.

In 2002, the parent 'Zuisho' pine produced a few cones that developed and began to open in August. I waited with great anticipation for these first seeds to ripen. As luck would have it, I waited one day too long before taking the cones off the tree; they opened and most of the seeds fell out! However, I did harvest 25 seeds and planted them in a flat of builders (coarse) sand.

Much to my surprise, one seed sprouted six weeks after the fall planting and grew all winter.

This year, the 'Zuisho' pine that I grafted 6 years ago produced a bumper crop of cones. Compared to other *P. parviflora*, the cones on 'Zuisho' are smaller and have fewer seeds. As of this mid-August writing, I have removed and opened 15 cones yielding over 200 pea-size seeds. Nine cones remain on the plant, and as they show signs of opening, I remove them and set them on our patio table to open. I don't wish to lose any seeds this time! Next year's crop of cones is already beginning to develop.

## Assessing *Pinus* seedlings

The 2003 Seed Exchange list from the American Conifer Society included several *Pinus parviflora*. When my seed

order arrived, I found seeds of *Pinus parviflora* 'Koko-no-e' as well as seeds from a witches broom of *Pinus aristata*. I planted each in a mix of Arlington

*As luck would have it, I waited one day too long before taking the cones off the tree; they opened and most of the seeds fell out*

County leaf mold and builders sand. All of my *P. parviflora* seedlings are eventually grown in pots, so this fall I will put up the two-year-old seedlings. Observing these seedlings thus far has helped me to understand the work required to select a unique plant!



All photos courtesy of Pete Jones

The author's patio table serves as seed extraction headquarters.

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This year, I've gathered seeds from *Pinus parviflora* 'Ara-kawa,' 'Koko-no-e,' 'Burke's Bonsai,' 'Zuisho' and one that I am trying to identify. I purchased the unidentified pine from Bob Fincham, and one of the local Blue Jays thought I didn't need the plastic label. As time permits, I will check my files to see if I can find my copy of the packing list of pines that came with my order.

According to some of the Bonsai books I have read, harvested seeds are placed in a bowl of water, and only the

seeds that sink to the bottom are viable and should be planted. My goal is to keep clear records so I can assess what works for me and what doesn't work. I also hope I can find a location where I can plant some of these young pines in the ground and observe their development in our region.

After all of these years of trying to find and grow good *P. parviflora* for Bonsai training, I now have the potential to grow some very nice plants to share with others. ▲



Cones must be harvested as soon as the scales begin to open or the seeds will be lost.



*About the Author:* Peter C. Jones lived in Fuerth Bay, Germany from 1960 to 1970. It was during this time that he became interested in horticulture, after seeing some of the old gardens in Europe. In 1971, he visited the Gotelli Collection for the first time and has been searching for rare, choice and unique conifers to grow since that visit. He is also working with Arlington County to develop a conifer collection.



Prolific cone production by *Pinus parviflora* 'Zuisho'

Below, 'Koko-no-e' is visible to the right behind 'Zuisho.'



# Grafting Seminar Inspires Attendees in Central Region

by Don Wild

Eleven brave souls traveled to the Gee Farms on January 22, 2005, to attend a grafting session with Kary and Gary Gee. Howling winds, frigid temperatures, and a foot of snow did not deter these participants, who traveled from as far away as southern Ohio and Wisconsin.

Throughout the morning and after lunch, the group learned firsthand about some of grafting's pitfalls and improved their technique with practice and expert advice from Gary and Kary. Before

leaving, they toured the poly house where the grafted plants recover in conditions of optimum humidity.

Although the weather unexpectedly reduced the class size from its original 20 participants, the smaller group was ideal for the space. The Gees plan to repeat this effort this winter, and we will probably limit the class size to 15.

Register soon if you want to participate and learn! Beginners are always welcome. ▲

Gary Gee explains the proper angle and length of a scion cut to a workshop participant.

The **CENTRAL REGION** will sponsor another Grafting Workshop on **Saturday, January 21, 2006**, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at **GEE FARMS, Stockbridge, Michigan.**

For information and reservations, contact Kary Gee at (517) 769-6772.



Needles are removed to prepare this scion for grafting.



All photos by Don Wild

Participants learned not to let go once the scion is inserted into the rootstock. This new graft was then wrapped immediately and moved to the high-humidity poly house.



The group toured Gee Farms' poly house, where recently-grafted plants receive the high humidity they require for proper healing.



Participants agreed that hands-on events like this one are a great way to learn.

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See page 21 for details.

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## Gary Whittenbaugh Receives the Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award of Merit for Dedicated Support of the Conifer Society

I joined the American Conifer Society in 1999 in order to attend the National Meeting in Oregon. It was there that I met Gary Whittenbaugh while we were exiled 30 miles from the meeting

change in plans.

It wasn't until a couple of years later that I appreciated just how much enthusiasm and energy rode in that red pickup from Iowa that was parked next to our hotel.

Gary has gardened for over 30 years and joined the ACS in 1995 after attending his first meeting in Madison, Wisconsin. His interest in dwarf and unusual conifers has grown over these past 10 years, and more recently he has lectured on the use of conifers in the garden, in the landscape, and in troughs. In just the past two years, he has done over 50 lectures and demonstrations! His lecture tour has taken him from Michigan to Colorado and from Atlanta to Minnesota.

Gary is probably best known for his Iowa Garden Rendezvous events. This year he organized his sixth Rendezvous, which drew 82 attendees to a one-day garden tour in Iowa. Gary has developed his event into an enjoyable, inexpensive weekend day of garden tours that at-

*continued on page 20*



Tom (left) and Gary Whittenbaugh

hotel after a fire eliminated several rooms at the Resort on the Mountain. This was my first experience with the American Conifer Society, and it was not going as planned.

Gary found himself in the same situation, and I couldn't help but notice his calm demeanor, enthusiasm, and down-home humor while accepting the

## The Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Garden Conifers Honors Joel Spingarn

Long before the American Conifer Society was in existence, Joel Spingarn was collecting dwarf and unusual conifers in his garden in Baldwin, New York. He started collecting and propagating unusual conifers in the mid 1950s.

Joel began as many of us did, simply looking for smaller, slower growing conifers which would fit into the con-

*Joel communicated and collaborated with nurserymen from the U.S., Europe, Canada and Japan.*

finer of his smaller city lot. Joel quickly became intrigued by the dwarf and unusual conifers and became relentless in his search.

Joel was a classic early example of the Addicted Conifer Syndrome. In the beginning, finding the unusual plant was difficult, as most nurseries did not propagate or sell these plants. If they did have something unusual, they would only reluctantly part with it. As a result, it became necessary to trade plants in order to increase one's collection. Joel communicated and collaborated with nurserymen from the U.S., Europe, Canada and Japan.

Joel also has been a member of the Rock Garden Society, and early on he began including conifers in his rock gar-

denscapes. Joel communicated regularly with Fred Bergman and Wm. Gotelli while propagating all the plants from Gotelli collection, which is now at the National Arboretum. Joel learned grafting techniques by visiting many of the established nurserymen on Long Island. He helped several early nurserymen select and promote their new and unusual dwarf conifers.

Joel Spingarn and Jean Iseli corresponded frequently in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At that time, a number of nurserymen, collectors, and hobbyists were talking about forming a conifer society. Through the efforts of Joel, Jean and others, a preliminary meeting was held at Joel's home on October 17. This was prior to the official formative meeting on January 9, 1983.

A more extensive biographical sketch by Frank Goodhart and Helen Dunn appeared in the Summer 1997 issue of the ACS *Bulletin* (Vol. 14, No. 3). Listed there also are references to seven of Joel's articles written for the ACS *Bulletin* and the publication of the North American Rock Garden Society.

It is a great honor and pleasure to award the 2005 ACS Merit Award for the development of Conifers to Joel Spingarn.

Joel and Ellie Spingarn live in Georgetown, CT.

*Don Wild, national president*

continued from page 18

tracts both new and longtime members.

Through his lecturing and his garden tours, Gary has personally recruited over 212 new members for the ACS. He has served as president of the Central Region for the past four years, plus he is a member of the National Board and the Iowa state representative for the ACS.

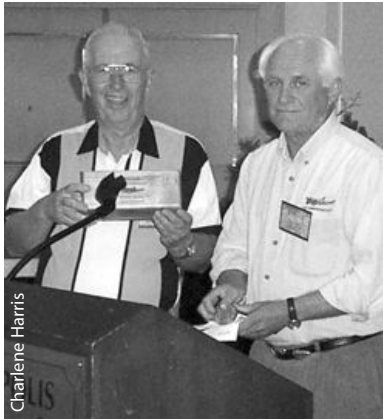
Gary has done all this while remaining active in his local Master Gardeners group and serving as a Roots Board member at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum. He is also a member of the National Rock Garden Society.

We cannot honor Gary without mentioning his brother Tom, who shares Gary's enthusiasm

but stays in the background supporting Gary.

Besides his commitment of time and effort, Gary is also exceedingly generous as he contributes plants, food, and handouts at his Rendezvous.

On behalf of the Board and members, it is with great pleasure that I present to Gary Whittenbaugh the Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award for Dedicated Support of the Conifer Society.



Don Wild,  
national president

ACS National  
President Don Wild  
(right) presents the  
Award of Merit to  
Gary Whittenbaugh.

## Central Region Honors Charlene Harris

In gratitude for her many years of volunteer service to the Central Region, the region honored her with a specially-designed jacket featuring the region's states embroidered on the back.



## Give the gift of Conifer Society Membership!

It's easy to share the Conifer Society's benefits with a friend. Just copy and mail the form below with your payment by **Dec. 10, 2005**, and we'll send the recipient:

- ▲ Our **Welcome Package** that includes information about growing conifers, our organization's activities, and the names of members to contact in that region for local updates.
- ▲ **A card announcing your gift** (or send along your own personalized note and we'll enclose it with the Welcome Package)
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## Collector's Conifer of the Year

The first new introductions for the Collector's Conifer of the Year program are now available, and are being offered for sale exclusively to the members of the American Conifer Society. This year there are two winning selections, a fast growing *Metasequoia* grown in a #1 container and a diminutive Alberta spruce, grown in 4" container, and both adaptable to most growing areas of the United States where conifers are commonly grown. Both plants come with a conditional one year /one time replacement guarantee, and will be shipped from Oregon in early March in a dormant condition. The plants will be packaged in their own shipping containers, and will be sent via UPS ground transportation where they can be planted immediately, or maintained outside in a protected place until the ground can be worked.

All plants offered in the Conifer of the Year program will be accompanied with our beautifully designed plant label designed especially for the Conifer Society and is unlike any other plant label currently available commercially, or to be found in arboreta. This unique 60 pt. anodized aluminum tag with its photo etched information permanently engraved, identifies each plant as the year's winning choice by the Collector's Conifer of the Year selection committee.

The purpose of the Collector's 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 a high value to collectors do not enjoy mass appeal, and are consequently only produced in nominal amounts. The selection committee's objective is to identify plants that would be of interest to conifer collectors, and have them produced in sufficient quantity 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. Another objective is, of course, to increase our membership, and one of the best avenues to get to our target audience would be through displays of conifers in arboreta and other public gardens which are frequented by the gardening public. With the revenues generated from the Conifer of the Year program, we should have an increased ability to offer meaningful assistance to these organizations on a selected basis, and in return, have the ability to promote ourselves by making our literature available. Funds generated by the Conifer of the Year will also assist us in other promotional efforts such as providing professionally rendered back drops and other graphic support for our people attending trade shows, garden exhibitions, flower shows and other public gatherings of gardeners.

Enclosed with your Conifer Quarterly is your 2006 Collectors Conifer of the Year information and ordering packet. So, indulge yourself by welcoming these wonderful plants into your collection, and at the same time, assist the Society in fulfilling its worthy mission!

### *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* 'Gold Rush'

As if touched by King Midas, this Golden Fossil glows in the summer in any landscape it is used. The golden-yellow foliage is vibrant and intoxicating to the garden visitor, drawing the eye to this warm and radiant sentry. It grows rapidly to a tall pyramidal tree with feathery, fern-like golden-yellow foliage. The soft golden foliage is produced early in the spring and is retained throughout the growing season until fall, when it turns a burnished bronze, and then orange, and descends like burning embers to the ground with the other deciduous leaves. Even without its feathery golden mantel, this Dawn Redwood is handsome with its fluted trunk and attractive bark. 'Gold Rush', like the rich golden light from a lantern will stand erect and glow like a beacon in the garden or landscape. We, like King Midas, are rich and fortunate to have this Golden Fossil in our gardens.

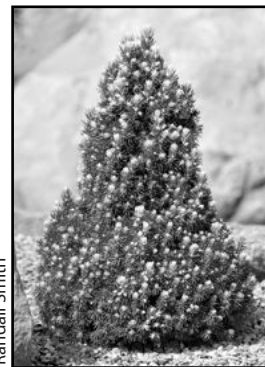


Dean Lindeman

### *Picea glauca* 'Pixie Dust'

This stellar new dwarf form of Alberta Spruce is conical and similar to a "Wizard's Hat", known to Harry Potter and his fans. The new emerging bud growth is yellow and appears like a multitude of twinkling stars in a dark firmament. Warm weather in spring or summer triggers the extraordinary lemon yellow coloration of the new growing points.

This color sport was found in a crop of 'Pixie' in 1994 at Iseli Nursery. Similar to the parent plant with the same slow growth and dense compact habit but with the additional bonus of the striking yellow new growth that contrasts dramatically with the deep green mature foliage. This diminutive plant is ideal for the rock garden, trough, decorative container, or as an accent in the landscape border. Every conifer collector will want to have 'Pixie Dust', a living copy of "Merlin's Hat" to perform wizardry in the garden.



Randall Smith



# Conifers in the News

Compiled by Tony Green

## The Needles Tell the Tale

Conifer needles have figured in several news stories that describe how they were used to determine everything from pollution levels to conifer growth.

A story in *The Missoulian* describes the work being done by a team of research scientists working in Glacier National Park, led by Dixon Landers of the EPA. The team is working to determine how much pollution is carried in the air over great distances. Glacier Park is an ideal laboratory for this effort, because it has no locally-produced pollution; any contaminants that are detected came from elsewhere, and measuring the levels can help determine how much and how far pollution can be transmitted. The team samples a variety of sources for pollution, including conifer needles, which act as pollution collectors. The stomates store atmospheric gases and the “waxy cuticle of the needle also catches some pollutants, providing a look at ambient air chemistry.” The needles can provide one or two years of data depending on their age.

While not exactly a pollutant, carbon dioxide is an important component of the atmosphere as the principal greenhouse gas. An article published in the September issue of *Geology* reported the results of a study to reconstruct CO<sub>2</sub> concentration for the mid-Cretaceous period. The authors used the “Stomatal characteristics of an extinct Cretaceous conifer, *Pseudofrenelopsis parceramosa*” comparing “stomatal indices of

fossil cuticles and those from four modern analogs (nearest living equivalent plants).” The fossils came from the Wealden and Lower Greensand Groups of England and the Potomac Group of

*The team samples a variety of sources for pollution, including conifer needles, which act as pollution collectors*

the eastern United States, of Hauterivian to Albian age. Their results peg mid-Cretaceous CO<sub>2</sub> at lower and more-stable levels than previously thought.

Not only does the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> affect the number of stomates on a needle, but it also affects conifer growth rate. A number of news outlets reported on a study by Heather McCarthy, a Duke University graduate student, who analyzed pine-needle data collected over a ten-year period. The data was collected at Duke’s Free-Air Carbon Dioxide Enrichment (FACE) facility, which offers a naturalistic environment for testing the results of atmospheric changes. Some stands of loblolly pines were exposed to elevated carbon-dioxide levels equivalent to the higher levels of CO<sub>2</sub> expected by 2050. Over the last six years, the treated pines “had on average about 17 percent more needles than untreated pines.”

## Members in the News

Connie Cottingham’s column in the *Athens Banner-Herald* described a visit to Flo Chaffin at her wholesale nursery, Specialty Ornamentals. In the course of the engaging interview, Flo recommended some less-common conifers for Connie’s garden, including several cultivars of *Thujaopsis*. The article also mentioned that her normally wholesale-only nursery was having its 6th Annual Charity Plant Sale this year benefiting the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation.

Barbara Blossom Ashmun’s column “Garden Muse” in the *Portland Tribune* told of her annual visit to the Oregon Convention Center for the Far West Show, produced by the Oregon Association of Nurseries. This year, she was inspired to join our Society. From all of us, welcome!

## Wollemi Trees At Auction

The latest chapter in the saga of the Wollemi pine was widely reported in the media. A “Collectors Edition” release of trees will be offered for sale by Sotheby’s in Sydney. The trees are about 10 feet tall and were grown from cuttings of the originals. 292 trees will be offered

in 148 lots ranging from a single tree to a grove of 20. Opening bids for a single tree start at \$1500. The trees come with their own authentication certificate, provenance record and care instructions. Proceeds help benefit conservation projects. Bid early and bid often.

## Champions and Other Big Trees

The *Los Alamos Monitor* reported that a white fir has been submitted by the New Mexico State Forestry Division to the National Register of Big Trees for consideration as a new champion. The tree was discovered in the Santa Fe National Forest in Bland Canyon by Forestry Division Inmate Work Camp Director Charles Wicklund. It is smaller in circumference than the current champion, but significantly taller.

Speaking of big trees, back in the Spring issue, this column mentioned the work of George Koch who considered the question, How tall can a tree grow? Now Koch and Stephen Sillet have determined a range of heights based on analysis of the condition of leaves at the tops of the tallest trees. Between gravity and the friction between the water and the vessels through which it flows, water

*“So much color and texture, full of life, changing through the seasons and years – That’s why I love conifers.”*

*Edward Remsrola*



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cannot be pumped any higher than 122-130 meters no matter how wet the soil is. The tallest tree, a coast redwood in California, is 112.7 meters high.

### Conifer Pests in the News

The *Athens* [Greece] *News* reported the

latest in an ongoing situation involving large-scale tree infestation by *Marchalina hellenica*, an insect that feeds on the sap of pine trees (and sometimes firs). The insect produces honeydew, a sweet secretion that honeybees feed on and in turn produce pine honey. Over the

last two decades, beekeepers have deliberately infested pine trees with *Marchalina hellenica* in an effort to increase honey production. Now the infestation has gotten out of hand. While the infestations were government-approved, controversy is swirling around when government support for infestations began. In March, further infestations in Attica were banned, but no action was taken in the rest of the country. In an effort to reverse the infestations, the agriculture ministry has experimented with nine different substances in an attempt to find the least-toxic method of controlling the insects.

The wooly adelgid has conquered all the counties in Tennessee and North Carolina surrounding Great Smoky Mountains National Park where the insect was discovered in 2002. In the Park at least, the insect is beginning to come under control. Ten seasonal or permanent employees are applying pesticides to the affected hemlocks and visible progress has been made. Although the wooly adelgid is moving westward at the rate of 15 miles per year, the Tennessee Valley offers the potential as a

natural barrier to further spreading. Much of the responsibility for control will lie with private landowners who will undoubtedly be motivated to protect their hemlocks from infestation.

The *Denver Post* reported on the scourge of bark beetles in Colorado. At least eight species of ips beetles and numerous other types of bark beetles are actively feasting on trees in the state, according to the Colorado State Forest Service. Not only do the beetles destroy piñon, spruce, fir and ponderosa pine, but the resulting dead trees become tinder and fuel for tomorrow's forest fires. ▲

Tony Green is husband of *Conifer Quarterly* Editor Anne Brennan. Though he works as a software developer, he dusts off his English degree to abstract conifer-related news stories for ACS members. If you find an article that should be included, send it to the Editor or e-mail Tony directly at [tony@merecat.org](mailto:tony@merecat.org).

## Nominations Sought for 2006 American Conifer Society Awards of Merit

Every year the Conifer Society honors its members with Awards of Merit. Nominations for next year's recipients must be received by **November 30, 2005**.

### Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers

The criteria for this award include the collecting and displaying of conifers, a willingness to share knowledge of plants, and the enthusiasm and drive to discover and develop noteworthy cultivars.

Also taken into consideration are published articles, books, or texts as well as new or improved propagation techniques and designs for the use of conifers.

### Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award of Merit for Dedicated Support of the ACS

This award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the Conifer Society through

their service, enthusiasm, commitment and promotion of membership in the Society.

Also, this award acknowledges those who have been deeply involved in the activities of the Conifer Society, organizationally or otherwise.

To be considered, your nomination must be accompanied by an outline of the nominee's contributions in the appropriate category. If you wish to nominate a member for either of these awards please include your candidate's name, address, and phone number as well as a brief description of why the person is deserving of the award.

Please send your nominations to:

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# Five Conifer Species Dominate Pacific Northwest's Temperate Rainforest

by Tom Cox

This past fall my wife, Evelyn, and I had the opportunity to visit some of the more rarely traveled portions of the Pacific Northwest and to spend some time evaluating the conifers that grow there. Over the course of the past 20-plus years, we have taken a number of trips to northern California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, and have walked among the forest giants of *Sequoia sempervirens* (coast redwood), *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas-fir) and *Picea sitchensis* (Sitka spruce). Like most visitors to this region, I have always stood in complete awe at the immensity of these ancient specimens, but I had never really thought much about the uniqueness of the region. These after all, were simply big trees.

On this trip we flew into Vancouver, British Columbia, and after exciting visits to the University of British Columbia (UBC) Botanical Garden and the Vanden Botanical Garden (both must-sees if you visit Vancouver), we made our way to Vancouver Island. After a few days in Victoria, we rented a car and drove to the charming little fishing village of Tofino, BC. This town is approximately six hours by car from Victoria and marks the northwestern-most point where one can drive; the road literally ends here.

We had pre-booked a perfectly romantic little inn (Cable Cove Inn) situ-

ated right on the shore of the wild Pacific Ocean. It was designated as one of the most romantic getaways in all of Canada and certainly lived up to its billing - even a hot tub on a private deck overlooking the ocean and a fireplace in the bedroom. From here one could easily explore the rugged Pacific Rim National Park. This unique park encompasses a total area of 49,962 hectares of land and features an old-growth coastal temperate rainforest.

It was here that I began to try and understand the forces that were in play and how this area fit in with the overall conifer mosaic. As a layman, trying to understand the complexity of this vast region - where plants dwarf anything found in the tropics - was far more daunting than I imagined.

In this vast swath of coast that begins in northern California and reaches some 2,000 miles north to Sitka, Alaska, a world lies suspended in time from a plant perspective. It is a world bounded on the southern end by coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), the tallest trees on earth that stretch beyond 350 feet in height. To the north along a narrow fog belt, the coast redwood is replaced by Western red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). All of these trees are known for enormous height

and longevity. Other, less-dominating conifers grow in the area as well, including the grand fir (*Abies grandis*) and the Port-Orford-cedar (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*).

This area is referred to as a temperate rainforest, in contrast to the more widely recognized tropical rainforests near the equator. Other countries that have temperate rainforests include Chile, New Zealand and Norway. The dominance of conifers makes the Pacific Northwest region unique. Here, be-

*Northwestern Washington receives less than 50 inches of rain on an annual basis, while Olympic National Park receives annual rainfall of 140 inches or more.*

cause of particular climatic conditions, is a complex ecosystem where conifers have retained a strong foothold.

As one walks through the carpet of moss and gazes upward, there is a sense of what earth might have looked like 200 million years ago. This was before the emergence of the angiosperms (flowering plants) that now dominate the earth. Today there are over 250,000 species of flowering plants and only around 700 conifers. So here, like no other place on earth, conifers (gymnosperms) have maintained their former dominance.

In the eastern deciduous forests, the tallest tree barely reaches two hundred feet, while in this coastal rainforest there are thirteen species that grow

higher. Why do the broad-leaved trees find preferable habitat in the East while the conifers find the Pacific Northwest to be more hospitable?

After some research, the answer emerged that these plants had maintained a foothold by adapting to particular conditions. While the climate of the Pacific Northwest varies considerably from California to Alaska, there are some common denominators. One example is the mountain range that traps the ocean moisture and serves to moderate severe weather extremes. The diverse topography fosters various climate conditions that allow for a variety of habitats where conifers flourish.

In all, some 30 species of conifers are indigenous to the region. In some areas the summers are hot and dry, the winters cold and wet. Northwestern Washington receives less than 50 inches of rain on an annual basis, while Olympic National Park receives annual rainfall of 140 inches or more. Plants need water and light to create food. Here in the summer there is ample light for photosynthesis but not enough water for most deciduous trees, except in specific areas where there are small stands of red alder (*Alnus rubra*) and vine maple (*Acer circinatum*). In the winter, when both water and light are sufficient, the low temperatures cause the flowering plants to lose their leaves and become dormant. The evergreen conifers, by contrast, are able to grow throughout the long winters, and since they use water more efficiently than broadleaved plants, they also thrive during the summer months.

An additional factor is the lack of soil nutrients as a result of high rainfall

that leaches the minerals from the soil. The most striking example of the role that rain plays is seen in a small section of the Pacific Rim National Park between the towns of Tofino and Uclulet, BC. In an area of no more than several acres, there is a pure forest of dwarf shore pines (*Pinus contorta* var. *contorta*). Trees, deprived of adequate nutri-

*Slow to grow and slow to die, some of these trees are more than 300 years old.*

tion, have suffered stunted growth and malformed limbs. Because the bog's soil is so acidic and waterlogged, the roots of the shore pine must struggle to absorb the few nutrients and minerals available. The resulting trees rarely exceed five feet in height and often resemble gigantic broccoli. Slow to grow and slow to die, some of these trees are more than 300 years old. It is interesting that the same species grows straight and tall in well-drained soils. In the Rocky Mountains these are referred to as lodgepole pines.

As mentioned earlier, there are some thirty species of conifers native to this region, but the "big five" dominate. While all can thrive in cultivation outside of the rainforest, nowhere else do they attain such stature.

***Sequoia sempervirens*** - The coast redwood occurs over a very limited range from Monterey, California, to southwestern Oregon. It can attain heights in excess of 365 feet (115 m) and is generally considered the tallest tree in the world. It is not uncommon to see this tree planted in public gardens and arboreta throughout the world. Redwood is the only conifer in the Pacific Northwest that will readily sprout from a stump. Numerous cultivars exist.

***Tsuga heterophylla*** - The Western hemlock is the tallest member of the genus and is quite common throughout the entire region. The name *heterophylla* means "different leaves" (as in leaf size), and this is one of the identifying characteristics. It is very shade tolerant and is therefore frequently found as an understory tree. Several years ago we received a small

tree from the Morris Arboretum in Pennsylvania, and it has turned out to be one of the surprises. Given its habitat, I would never have thought this species would live, let alone prosper, in the heat and humidity of the Southeast. Aside from the weeping cultivar 'Thorsen's Weeping,' I don't recall ever seeing this species in cultivation.

***Picea sitchensis*** - The Sitka spruce is the world's tallest spruce and the main timber tree in Alaska. It is commonly found along the entire coastline from Alaska to northern California and grows well in damp sites. Like *T. heterophylla*, this species has given rise to very few cultivars, though several collectors in the southeast report success with a cultivar named 'Papoose.'

***Thuja plicata*** - The Western red-cedar is not a cedar at all but rather an arborvitae. True cedars, *Cedrus* spp., are native only to the Mediterranean and Himalayan regions of the world. *Thuja* differs from true cedars in the shape of the leaf; arborvitae have tiny, scale-like leaves that overlap to form flat sprays like a fern. True cedars have evergreen needles borne in dense clusters. Due to its high tolerance for shade, Western red-cedar is often found growing with Western hemlock but, unlike hemlock, red-cedar retains its lower branches as it gets older. It was and still is the preferred tree for totem poles, shingles and dug-out canoes. Unlike other Pacific Northwest conifers, red-cedar sprouts new foliage along the trunk.

The late Dr. J.C. Raulston was one of the first individuals to recognize

and promote its use as an ornamental in the Southeast. The species seems perfectly adapted to many areas of the country, and there are numerous cultivars in the trade.

***Pseudotsuga menziesii*** - The Douglas-fir is not a true fir. True fir belongs to the genus *Abies*. Because of its distinctive cones, *Pseudotsuga* was given its own genus name that means "false hemlock." There are reported to be two distinct varieties of Douglas-fir: *Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii* grows along the coast and can attain heights of 250 feet (75 m). The Rocky Mountain var. *glauca* only reaches 100 feet (35 m) in height.

As people are prone to travel around the globe in search of the exotic, I hope this article will serve to remind us that within easy reach is an area unique in all the world – an area that is relatively safe and one that contains myriad hiking trails that afford easy access to the relics of the past. ▲

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

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# A Few Views of Northwestern America

by Jordan Jack

*A family gathering sparks a West Coast conifer adventure*

This April my wife, Bennett, and I had a grand vacation in the American Northwest, including parts of the states of Oregon and Washington, and we even took in a bit of Victoria, the capital of Canada's British Columbia. The main reason for our trip was the marriage of our daughter, Griffen, who lives in Portland, Oregon, though we also celebrated our 51st anniversary during our adventure. And we saw lots of conifers!

When we arrived in Portland from North Carolina, we drove to the wedding site in the small, coastal resort of Pacific City right on the shore of the Pa-

cific Ocean. This two-hour drive took us through the low mountains of Tillamook State Forest covered in second-growth Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). These large trees will probably be cut for saw timber in another ten years. Once we reached the coast, we found the lowland filled with lush dairy pastures for the Tillamook Cheese Company, the second largest cheesemaker in America. From our room in Pacific City that overlooked the ocean, we could see youngsters surfing, all of them wearing wetsuits due to the cold water.

One day we drove down the coast

about 35 miles to the town of Newport and its busy fishing harbor. About 75 commercial fishing boats were docked there, many of them selling fresh salmon directly from the boats. We observed an interesting "garbage disposal" system; after filleting a customer's fish, they banged on the side of the hull and almost instantly, a large bull sea lion appeared. The captain held the scraps about four feet above the water, and the big boy slowly raised up out of the water to take the scraps from the captain's hand.

We had driven the old coastal road, Route 101, many years ago, but this time we noticed a new addition along the way. Bright new signs proclaiming "Warning – Tsunami Danger Area" were posted at all low areas near the ocean; last year's Indian Ocean tragedy certainly had an effect.

On the way back to Portland after the wedding, we continued up the coast almost to Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River, to visit the rebuilt Fort Clatsop, the last wintering place of the Lewis & Clark expedition in 1805. It was located in a Sitka spruce forest of four- and five-foot diameter trees. The Columbia River is over three miles wide at this point – a spectacular view!

Many of my West Coast friends in the American Conifer Society had told me over the years that, if we were ever in the Oregon/Washington area, we must make time for a side trip to Victoria, Vancouver Island, in British Colum-

bia to visit Butchart Gardens. We took their advice and drove to Seattle to take the Victoria Clipper, a high-speed passenger ferry, to Victoria. The Clipper is a catamaran-style, two-hulled ship that carries about 300 passengers. Once out of the Puget Sound and in the large Bay of Juan de Fuca, the Clipper travels as fast as 38 knots (almost 45 MPH), so we completed the 110-mile trip in just under two-and-a-half hours. The day before, the clipper's passengers had seen a pod of orcas (killer whales), though we did not have this pleasure.

We took a cab to the Waddling Dog, our small, funky hotel that advertised a resident Bassett Hound in the front lobby. And sure enough, there was that great intellectual of the dog kingdom; Bennett just couldn't wait to pet him. Another taxi took us to the famous Butchart Gardens, some 52 acres of magnificent gardens that celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Although not heavily planted with dwarf conifers, these gardens were glorious. A portion of the gardens is located in an abandoned limestone quarry some 60 feet deep and named the Sunken Gardens. Thousands of tulips were in full bloom. Annuals including forget-me-nots in several shades of blue spilled over throughout the colorful gardens.

Along many of the paths were dogwoods and rhododendrons six to 10 feet tall and just entering peak bloom. The rhodie colors ranged from white through several shades of pink, red, lavender, purple and even yellow. Most of the garden areas are surrounded by towering 100-year-old evergreens. About five years ago, many named clones of garden conifers were planted in the sunken gar-

The sunken garden at Butchart Gardens lies at the bottom of a former quarry.



Jordan Jack

den, but the tall tulips and annual flowers were hiding many of them during our visit. They probably show up far better in the fall.

Next we entered the Japanese garden that included a wide variety of perennials and annuals. Several small streams spilled down the hill into goldfish-filled ponds at the bottom. The sound of water cascading over rocks was audible throughout this garden. Many small rock gardens featured Japanese andromeda (*Pieris japonica*), small-leafed rhododendrons, dwarf conifers and a wide range of small perennials. We were pleased to see our old friend, *Pulmonaria* 'Mrs. Moon,' which grows throughout our home garden in the North Carolina mountains.

The Italian Gardens, which were built around a rectangular pond, were quite formal and well done but not my cup of tea. In the next garden area, masses of tulips surrounded one large star-shaped pond. Large bronze frogs sprayed water into this pool, and we learned that Mr. Butchart built it in 1931 for his pet ducks. Their descendants were still residing there.

The eighteen-foot diameter Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) at Kootchy County Park dwarfs Bennett Jack.



Jordan Jack

The only garden that disappointed us was the rose garden, as none of the roses were in bloom. Bennett had looked forward to giving her nose a workout on the spicy scents, but it was just too early in the year for this display. The lack of identification tags on the plants was another disappointment; I asked about this and was told that this garden was not a botanical garden but a display garden, and tags would detract from the plants' beauty.

Toward the end of our visit to Butchart Gardens, we rested on the benches in the concert area. A larger-than-life-sized cast brass wild boar, whose nose is polished bright by all of the attention from visitors, dominates this area of the garden. And next to the brass boar were two cast brass miniature donkeys, just the right size for little children to climb on. During the 10 minutes we watched, at least 20 young children climbed up on the little donkeys while

proud parents clicked away with their cameras.

We were only in the gardens for three hours, but our visual senses were saturated. If time allowed, we surely could have returned the very next day and noticed ever so many more details in this garden that we missed on our visit.

This magnificent garden is still privately-owned and employs 125 gardeners to manicure it. We never saw a single weed. Surprisingly, we saw virtually no gardeners working as we toured the gardens.

Our West Coast ACS friends deserve our thanks for recommending we see these gardens.

Saturday morning we rode into Victoria and checked our bags at the Victoria Clipper pier in the inner harbor. A short walk away was the late 19<sup>th</sup> century British Columbia Parliament Building. Much of the limestone removed from the old Butchart quarry was used to build this impressive building. In front of the Parliament Building was a most unusual conifer, an old coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) with a trunk over eight feet in diameter but, surprisingly, a height of only about 50 feet. A friendly policeman told us the tree had been planted in the 1860s. It serves as the City of Victoria Christmas tree and is decorated with lights during the holidays.

The nearby Royal British Columbia Museum, with its Northwest-themed exhibits from the dawn of history through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is surrounded by gardens with over 400 types of wildflowers, shrubs and trees that are native to British Columbia. Unfortunately, time did not allow us to visit these gardens, but the

museum's galleries featured a wide range of artifacts from the native peoples. The totem pole hall was striking and displayed over 50 totems.

Upon our return to Seattle, we drove down the old coastal route along the Washington coast. The small town of South Bend proclaims itself the oyster capital of the country on large signs, and we saw large piles of oyster shells everywhere. Bennett even had an oyster club sandwich for lunch.

We drove countless miles directly along the Pacific Ocean during our trip. Bennett loved the sight of the pounding surf on the beaches strewn with massive trunks of drift wood. All of the little towns we drove through were filled with large rhododendrons in full bloom – a real joy. After crossing the broad Columbia River at Astoria, we turned onto Route 26 towards Portland.

A final conifer treat presented itself during this last leg of our journey. A small Kootchy County Park boasts one of the largest *Picea sitchensis* in America. The tree is certainly impressive at 18 feet in diameter and 220 feet in height. Its age is estimated at over 750 years, and the reason it was not timbered when the rest of the area was harvested in the 1850-1870 time period is that it was too large; the timber companies could not have moved it to the local saw mills. The little park had many other Sitka spruce that were approximately five feet in diameter and had been too small to harvest some 150 years before.

We cannot recommend the Pacific Northwest highly enough as a destination for conifer lovers! ▲

# Make More Room for Dwarf Evergreens

by William H. Zinkham

Five years ago, I wrote an article titled “Make Room for Dwarf Evergreens” that appeared in the *Conifer Quarterly* (Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 148). That piece traced the journey of a group of dwarf evergreens from their original three-quarter acre shady garden home to a new habitat, a 10-foot square sunny plot in the Oak Crest Village retirement community near Baltimore, Maryland. Over a period of five years, the original collection flourished in the full-sun exposure of the community garden plots –

so much so that overcrowding became a problem. One of the Colorado blue spruces (*Picea pungens* ‘Thume’) was rubbing limbs with a Japanese black pine (*Pinus thunbergii* ‘Nishiki Nee’), and taller plants were hiding smaller dwarf varieties.

I considered several solutions to the problem: Could we find more space? Could we have a plant sale or donate some of the plants to friends or neighbors? What would happen to the dwarfs if we initiated a pruning program?



William H. Zinkham

The Chapel Rock Garden at Oak Crest Village retirement community in Baltimore provides space for dwarf conifers to stretch their limbs by a reflecting pool.

Just when we were about to make some difficult choices, an unexpected opportunity arose. Brian Dorsey, the grounds manager of our retirement community, had landscaped an outstanding evergreen shrub and perennial garden along the east side of our Chapel. After consulting with him, we designed a large rock garden adjacent to the north side of the Chapel in an area that was overflowing with ground cover. Several larger dwarfs served as core plantings, supplemented by smaller dwarfs and some newly purchased trees.

In mid-October, the grounds crew dug up and burlapped twenty-four of the evergreens in the 10-by-10-foot plot and carefully transported them to the new area near the Chapel. The landscapers had prepared a bed with mounded soil and well-positioned rocks. As a special highlight, one of the crew had designed a small pool with a waterfall. By evening, all twenty-four plants were transplanted into their expanded quarters, an area approximately 20 by 40 feet. Cascading like a fountain over one end of the pool is an exceptional red-leaved maple (*Acer palmatum* ‘Crimson Queen’) purchased with two other red-leaved maples and several conifers from Gregg A. Gulden at Suncrest Gardens.

Now more visitors can view each dwarf from many different angles, which allows appreciation of their myriad forms, branch and leaf shapes, and color variations as never before. Also, the overall combination of plants and water provides an environment for peaceful meditation on the nearby benches outside the Chapel.

You may wonder what happened to the former home of the transplanted

dwarfs, “Plot 49.” The design of the original garden is still evident. The stone walkway leads to a bird bath that serves more as a rain gauge than as a bathing facility for birds. Although the composition of the plants changed when the new garden was installed, the primary focus on evergreens remains, including hollies and boxwood as well as conifers. Assembling the new collection of plants took less than a month, thanks to the increased availability of dwarfs in local plant outlets and contacts with nurseries.

How long will it be until these plants’ zeal to be the biggest and tallest among dwarfs forces us to find some of them an even larger room? Perhaps we will be expanding the Chapel Rock Garden! ▲

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*About the author:* Dr. William H. Zinkham is a Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland.

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## 2005 National Meeting Tour Links Conifers with Contemporary Art, Higher Education

by Anne Brennan

Each ACS meeting I've attended has presented some unique perspective on conifer culture and display, and this year's national meeting, headquartered in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, was no exception.

As has become a meeting tradition, attendees gathered on Thursday evening, August 4th, for a buffet dinner and a few short presentations to kick off

the event. Our invited speaker was Jock Demme, Sales Manager at Iseli Nursery, who discussed the landscape trends that he feels bode well for the development and use of more conifers.

On Friday morning, we boarded the buses and headed to Swarthmore College, whose campus is geographically synonymous with the Scott Arboretum. On the way, our bus captains explained

the significance of the Quaker education movement in the Philadelphia area, and helped us to appreciate the very high regard in which this liberal arts college is held. Quite a few large specimen conifers are growing on the campus, and well-prepared guides from the arboretum staff showed us the highlights as we walked the grounds in small groups. Several attendees in my group were thrilled to spot a witches' broom at the top of a mature *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca,' as we headed back toward the pinetum area of the campus and our waiting lunches.

After lunch, we moved on to a garden that used to be one of the area's best

kept secrets. Chanticleer opened to the public about fifteen years ago, and its appeal extends far beyond professional plantspeople and avid gardeners. I can't imagine any person of any age or background who would not enjoy a stroll through these intensively cultivated grounds. Every turn of the path presents another unexpected vista or sculptural planting design that draws the visitor into the next area of this diverse garden. If not for the intense summer heat on the day of our visit, we could have spent hours wandering through the endless features of this 35-acre site.

Our Saturday tour took the idea of sculptural planting design to the next

*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula' (weeping blue Atlas cedar) provides a cascading backdrop to Isaac Witkin's cast bronze sculpture "Hawthorne Tree II" (1990).



All photos by Anne Brennan

Our group enjoyed a break from the heat during lunch at Swarthmore College, where the Scott Arboretum is located.

level, as we visited the Grounds for Sculpture in Trenton, New Jersey. Earlier that morning, architect Brian Carey and nurseryman Douglas Kale had familiarized our group with the history and development of this sculpture garden. Even so, many attendees were surprised at the degree to which this sculpture garden is in fact a *garden*. Conifers play a primary role in creating the outdoor rooms and separated display spaces for the large art installations. Specimen plants abound, too, and create a natural foil to the often austere man-made objects.

Many of this year's meeting attendees have known Jim and Barbara Smith of Blue Sterling Nursery for many years, while others had not yet met them in person. However, almost everyone who is passionate about conifers knows

of Blue Sterling Nursery and its reputation for quality wholesale plants. So what better place for late-afternoon happy hour and a farewell pig roast?

When our buses arrived, Blue Sterling staff boarded to lead us on a brief driving tour of the property, including a peek at the new state-of-the-art propagation greenhouse. We unloaded near the recently established "arboretum" area that already includes a large number of conifer cultivars on display but includes plenty of room for expansion. Here, the art of digging and preparing a balled-and-burlapped tree by hand was demonstrated several times for attendees (*see page 9*).

The group soon gravitated to Jim and Barbara's house on the property, where our hosts provided refreshments before dinner. We lounged by the pool and among the extensive plantings that

made this the perfect place for entertaining. In fact, we were a bit reluctant to leave this paradise to walk to the dining tent, but as soon as we arrived there, we settled in with a different group of ACS friends with whom we'd not yet had time to connect on this trip, and we enjoyed the evening immensely. Finally, as the sun set, we boarded the buses and

departed for our hotel in Mt. Laurel.

This year's tour included both sites that expand one's awareness of history and culture and those that appeal to a gardener's more basic desire for practical, take-home ideas. We thank meeting co-chairs Ridge Goodwin and Barbara Smith and all of the volunteers who made this meeting so memorable. ▲



A young *Taxodium* grove grows adjacent to the Ruin Garden at Chanticleer.



Acres of impeccably maintained, containerized conifers at Blue Sterling Nursery greeted our tour buses as we arrived for Saturday's pig roast – the final event of the meeting.

# 2006 National Meeting in Tennessee To Showcase Natural Beauty and Native Conifers

by Maud Henne

In 2006, it is the Southeastern Region's privilege to host the ACS National Meeting. The Planning Committee is excited to share the news that the site and headquarters will be in Tennessee. This is a state that has never been visited by the ACS in the more than 20 years that we have been in existence.

Our base will be in Knoxville, where our search committee encountered an unexpected spirit of welcome, hospitality and cooperation. The June 14-17 meeting dates were chosen to beat the summer heat of the Southeast.

The most exciting outdoor attraction of our meeting will be a day in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We will spend one full day in this spectacular mountain range at the southern end of the

Appalachians, which start in Maine. We will drive along streams splashing over boulders and rocks and lined with native hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*). We will take in grand views from the higher elevations with altitudes above 6,000 feet,

The private Solomon garden features natural hillside plantings.



to see red spruce (*Picea rubens*) and some of the remaining stands of Fraser firs (*Abies fraseri*). If we are lucky, native rhododendron (Catawba and Rosebay), mountain laurel and flame azaleas will be in bloom. A vegetation specialist park ranger will explain the threats to some tree species and the efforts of the National Park Service to ensure their survival. In the Winter 2006 issue of the Conifer Quarterly, we will introduce you to more details about the forests in the Great Smoky Mountains.

In Knoxville, we will visit private woodland gardens on hillsides; the trial gardens of the University of Tennessee's Department of Agriculture; a conifer trial collection at a nursery; and the future

Knoxville Botanical Garden on the site of the previous Howell Nursery that was founded in 1786. The Howell Nursery was most likely one of the first nurseries in the US. Here we will see a very old specimen of *Cedrus libani* (cedar-of-Lebanon), mature *Cunninghamia lanceolata* 'Glauca,' *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (Dawn redwood) and other conifers that were planted 20 to 40 years ago.

To add to our excitement, we have just confirmed that Don Shadow of Shadow Nursery in Winchester, Tennessee, will be one of our featured speakers. For those who are not familiar with Don, he is a world-renowned grower and collector of plants including conifers. Don is well known around the world, especially in

Japan where he regularly visits in an effort to offer the latest introductions in horticulture. *Picea orientalis* 'Shadow's Broom' was but one of many introductions.

A post-conference tour will have Asheville, North Carolina, as its destination and include the famous Biltmore Estate, the North Carolina



Photos courtesy of Maud Henne

*Cunninghamia lanceolata* on the site of the future Knoxville Botanical Garden



Arboretum, and quite a few exciting private gardens in the area. In addition, we are exploring the possibilities for a pre-conference hike to old-growth forest in the Smokies for experienced hikers and, as an option for non-hikers, a day trip to Cades Cove featuring 18th- and 19th-century farm buildings along an 11-mile loop in the beautiful Great Smoky Mountain setting.

"You can't grow conifers in the Southeast," I was once told. That may be true in southern Florida and other tropical and subtropical areas. In reality, it is surprising how many species grow in the Southeast. The region consists of not only coastal areas but also the hilly Piedmont and the mountain ranges of

the Appalachians running through Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee, with elevations over 6,600 feet (2,200 m) and climate zones comparable to Maine and Southern Canada.

Quite a few species of pines and junipers thrive in the Southeast. The *Southern Living Garden Book* lists 21 species and cultivars of pines for our region and 37 taxa of junipers. In the coastal plains and the hilly Piedmont areas, aside from junipers and pines, *Taxodium*, *Cedrus deodara*, *Cryptomeria*, *Cunninghamia*, *Cupressus*, *Glyptostrobooides* and others thrive here while struggling in colder climates. And then there are the forests, even old-growth forests, in the mountains with native *Tsuga canadensis* (hemlock), *Picea rubens* (red spruce) and *Abies fraseri* (Fraser fir).

It is true, however, that garden conifers have not made their entry into many public and private gardens to the extent they have in more northern locations. But efforts by nurseries and botanical gardens to change that are under way. Here, in accordance with our mission statement, ACS can make a difference by increasing awareness by the public, professionals and hobbyists alike of the availability and suitability of garden conifers for the southern landscape. ▲

*About the author:* Maude Henne lives in Charlottesville, Virginia, and is co-chair of the 2006 National Meeting as well as president of the Southeastern Region.

## Western Region Plans November Meeting

The Western Region invites you to "Conifers of the World" on Saturday, November 5, 2005, at Buchholz & Buchholz Nursery and Elk Cove Winery in Gaston, Oregon.

The day's events will begin at noon with a tour of Buchholz & Buchholz Nursery's arboretum and private collection at two locations. You will see new and exciting cultivars and rare species of conifers and maples.

After the tour, we will reconvene at Elk Cove Winery at 4:00 PM for hors d'oeuvres and wine while visiting with our conifer friends and bidding on the silent auction plants. At 6:00 PM, Willamette Valley Catering will be serving hazelnut crusted halibut and chicken breast stuffed with Oregon mushrooms and Fontina cheese.

Following dinner, Daniel Luscombe, Assistant Curator of Bedgebury National Pinetum, will speak. Mr. Luscombe is co-founder of the recently created British Conifer Society and has collected and studied conifers in New Zealand, New Caledonia, Tasmania,

Queensland, South Africa, Spain, Holland, Sicily and Turkey. The Bedgebury National Pinetum is nestled quietly among lakes and valleys in the Kent countryside in England.

Our day will conclude with a verbal plant auction offering our members an opportunity to purchase rare and unusual plants not available to the general public. We hope to see you there!

For more information, contact Kathleen Pottratz at (503) 985-7561 or [kathleen@fisherfarms.com](mailto:kathleen@fisherfarms.com).



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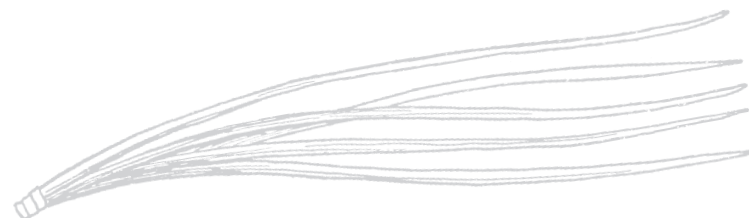
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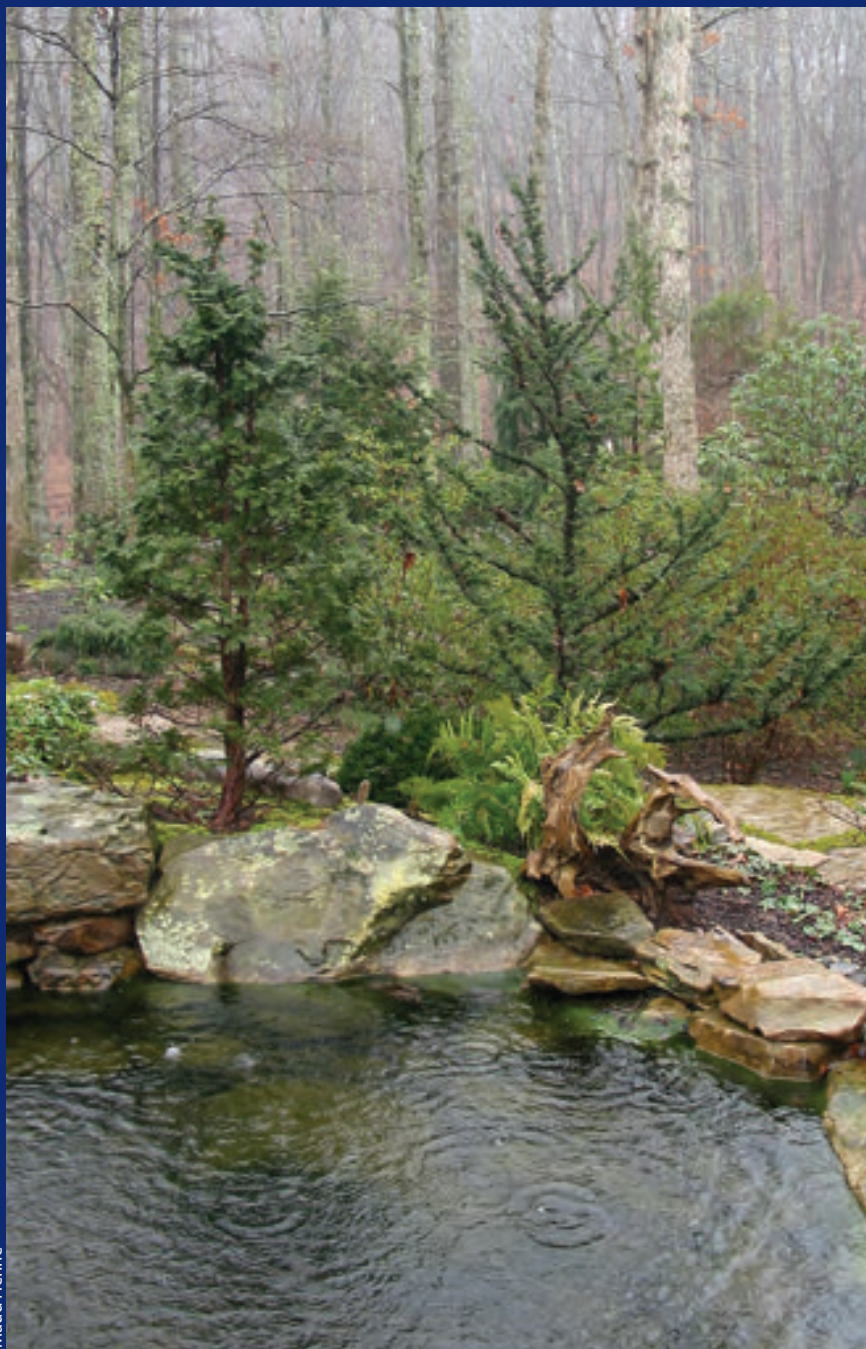


The Grounds for Sculpture in Trenton, New Jersey, was another unique stop on this year's national meeting tour.

A just-grafted *Picea orientalis* 'Skylands' from the Central Region's grafting workshop last January at Gee Farms.

Don Wild





Maud Henne

**The Pardue garden is but one highlight of next June's National Meeting tour in Tennessee. Read more about the meeting on page 42.**