

# Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 24 No. 4

Fall 2007

***Picea pungens* 'The Blues'**  
**2008 Collectors Conifer of the Year**



**Full-size Selection**

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Stanley & Sons Nursery, Inc.

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# Conifer Quarterly

Fall 2007  
Volume 24, 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, 175 Charisma Lane, Lewisville, NC 27023-9611. Membership: US \$30 (indiv.), \$35 (joint), \$30 (institutional), \$50 (sustaining), \$100 (corporate business) and \$130 (patron). If you are moving, please notify the National Office 4 weeks in advance.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I start this letter, we are headed into fall. In my years of gardening, this has been the most memorable year ever. It started with an unusually warm February and March, followed by the record freeze in April, and we just broke a record for the number of consecutive days in triple digits. To make things worse, prior to yesterday, we had no rain for more than two months. This is when gardening challenges the soul and separates those in it for the long haul from the faint of heart.

On the positive side, with the exception of a half dozen or so new conifers that were not established, all others survived and are looking great. When compared with the many angiosperms in the arboretum, the conifers are the centerpieces in early September. More and more people in the South are beginning to come to this realization.

I had the good fortune to attend both the Central Region Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, and the National Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Both were well attended, and from my vantage point, both went exceptionally well. This is due in large part to the hard work of many dedicated volunteers. I especially want to thank our national secretary, Kathleen Pottratz, for her tireless efforts in helping ensure that the National Meeting was such a success. Kathleen had a triple challenge: a full time job at Fischer Farms Nursery, preparing the meeting packets for the Board of Directors meeting, and planning the National Meeting.

I want to now depart from my traditional president's letter to update you on several fronts.

**Board of Directors (BOD) meeting:** The summer BOD meeting was held on July 26, 2007.

**Financials** – Every significant revenue category is ahead of last year; including mem-

bership dues (3%) and Conifer Quarterly advertising (31%). The 2007 Collectors Conifer of the Year (CCOY) has outperformed the total of last year's 2006 CCOY and National Meeting auction combined (a special thanks to Ridge Goodwin who oversees this program). Two additional life memberships have been purchased. The National Operating Fund account balance of \$212,140 is 132% higher than the balance on hand of \$91,379 at this point last year, reflecting meeting and Post Tour income that has yet to be offset by expenses for these events. We are operating in the black.

**Membership** – The total number of memberships in the Society as of June 30, 2007, was 1,899 compared with 1,889 on January 1, 2007, when the membership year began. One area of concern is the rate at which we are attracting new members. While our member retention rate is around 80%, high for an organization such as ours, this is the fourth straight year that we have had a decline in the new member component over the previous year. This suggests several things: a) we appear to be doing a good job overall in meeting the needs of the current membership base, b) our recruitment efforts are falling short of where we need to be, and c) as our current membership ages, it is imperative that we make this an area of high priority. This will be a topic of focus at our Winter BOD meeting in February 2008. If you have suggestions or want to volunteer, please contact me at [coxarb@bellsouth.net](mailto:coxarb@bellsouth.net).

**ACS Web site** – The Web site continues to be updated and significant improvements have been made. If you have not accessed it recently, I suggest you give it a look. The plant database is quite extensive (4,600 records with more than 2,000 photos) and is most helpful for those doing research or verifying a plant name. Thanks, Bill Barger.

**Publicity** – The ACS now has a National PR

coordinator. Walter Cullerton has stepped up to run this program. His job is to work with the press in all areas of publicizing the Society. If you have questions or input, Walter would love to hear from you. His e-mail address is [OXFORDWALT@aol.com](mailto:OXFORDWALT@aol.com).

**2007 National Meeting** – The 2007 meeting was held in Seattle, Washington, July 27–29. We had 190 paid attendees, which ranked this the third highest attended meeting in the history of the ACS. We had seven past presidents in attendance, a fact I regretfully failed to acknowledge during my welcoming speech. These were:

Bob Fincham	1983–1987
Frank Goodhart	1996–1997
Jordan Jack	1997–1999
Larry Stanley	1995–1996
Marvin Snyder	1999–2002
Dennis Groh	2002–2004
Don Wild	2004–2006

We were blessed with perfect weather and beautiful gardens. Based on the feedback that I received, both the National Meeting and the Post Tour went well. As with any event, there are always things that we can do better, and effective with this meeting, we have implemented a standard “after action” report and attendee feedback form. A book will be created that will contain all feedback, as well as lessons learned. The intent is that this be passed on to the region hosting the next meeting. Hopefully, we then don't repeat areas where we did not perform as well as we would like.

Lastly, I had the honor of presenting our two Awards of Merit to two deserving individuals: Maud Henne and Paul Halladin. Read the complete details inside this issue.

Have a great fall with lots of rain, where needed, and cooler weather.



## EDITOR'S MEMO

BY EVELYN COX

Our theme for this issue is “Unusual, Rare, and Endangered Conifers.” I thought about the word “endangered” while watching television coverage of a recent plane crash into one of the Great Lakes. The hero of the story must have had something similar to the word *endangered* in mind when he jumped into action in response to this tragic event.

Perhaps assuming that all on board were not lost but endangered, he thrust a small boat into the water and frantically rowed, even as darkness settled. By taking immediate action, and after much searching, he was able to rescue a seven-year-old boy who otherwise would have certainly perished. This young boy was the only survivor of three passengers.

Though not in such a dramatic and immediate way, there are people in the plant world who come to the rescue when plants are endangered. They accept the challenge, rather than saying it can't be done or waiting for someone else to do it. In this issue, David Ruland (a new contributor to the *CQ*) tells us of efforts underway at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens to save from extinction one of the plants on the U.S. endangered plant list, the Florida torreya (*Torreya taxifolia*). And from the West Coast, one of our regular contributors, Tim Thibault, writes about some of California's plants that are rare, endangered, or warranting conservation concern.

As to the rare classification, we have two explorer stories. One is from another new contributor, Bill McNamara of Quarryhill Botanical Garden in Sonoma County, California, and the other is from regular contributor, Dan Luscombe of Bedgebury Pinetum, United Kingdom. Both are daring in their quest to seek and preserve rare and unusual plants, even for

a few seeds. Once home, they work hard to cultivate them for future generations. Were it not for the efforts of individuals such as these, many plants would face certain extinction – especially in China where rapid development is claiming much of the native forest.

We have some photos from Dr. Clark West of some seedlings he's unsure about and from North Carolina, we have a story about Bruce Appeldoorn's unusual experience in the plant world. At our recent National Meeting, Bruce told me he was writing an article for us about the difficulties that can occur when gardeners run into *extra large* problems. Extra large is no exaggeration, as you will see from his story with graphic photos.

We have other photos taken by some of our regular contributors sprinkled throughout this issue. Maud Henne and Kimberly Karlin sent in some nice shots of unusual cones, and you will see the work of other regularly contributing photographers: Randy Smith, Jim Kelley, and Larry Stanley. Thanks to all of you great photographers for brightening our pages and enhancing our stories. These are particularly effective now that we are color inside and out.

Welcome, fall! Our summer down south has been beastly. Many of you have experienced the same or worse and will also appreciate the relief and refreshment of fall. I hope you enjoy yours. For me, it has never been more welcome.



*Evelyn*

### **Next Issue: Winter 2008 – *Cephalotaxus***

Our next issue will feature the genus *Cephalotaxus*. This is an underutilized genus that deserves to be more widely grown. Whether in sun or in shade, this is one tough plant for which deer seem not to have developed taste - unlike its cousin, *Taxus*.

Please share your experiences with *Cephalotaxus* including the species, cultivars and the zone where you have grown it or have observed it growing. As always, photos welcomed.

#### **Future issue themes:**

Please look at future themes and consider sending your articles in advance of published deadlines.

- Hidden Garden Gems
- *Sciadopitys*
- *Tsuga*
- Special Winter 2009 Issue: Conifers – The All-season Plants

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

## *Are You Taking Pictures Yet?*

### **SPECIAL WINTER 2009 CONIFER QUARTERLY ISSUE**

#### **CONIFERS – THE ALL-SEASON PLANTS**

***Do you have a favorite conifer? We know it's a hard choice, but try to pick just one. Then, take some photos during the upcoming seasons prior to November 2008 showing just what your plant can do throughout the coming year. Your collection of seasonal photos should be sent to the Editor by November 12, 2008.***

***Mark your calendars so that you will have at least one photo for each season. Photos should be minimum 300 dpi, jpeg format is preferred. E-mail or make a CD and send to the editor.***

# Competitors for the Dwarf Alberta Spruce

by Clark D. West

Over 100 years ago, three attractive dwarf conifers were discovered growing in the wilderness around Lake Laggan in Alberta, Canada. They were sent to the Arnold Arboretum. One, or perhaps all three of them, are the ancestors of the well known dwarf Alberta spruce, *Picea glauca* 'Conica'. Presumably, they were seedlings from a witches' broom nearby. Despite the many witches' broom seedlings from other species of spruce that have been brought into the world, none has the perfect conical shape and smooth outline of the dwarf Alberta and, is easily propagated by cuttings. *Note: a spontaneous seedling of dwarf Alberta spruce has recently been found on an island off the coast of Maine. Are any other ACS members aware of similar*

*dwarf Alberta spruce that arose from seed?*

I wish to report that competition may be waiting in the wings. I was fortunate to be the recipient, via Randy Dykstra, of *Picea pungens* witches' broom seeds gathered by Jerry Morris in the wild. There were so many seeds that I had the luxury of planting a large cohort of them every year for a number of years so that I had seedlings in several stages of development. About two years ago, I noticed that one was very twiggy and dense and had a smooth outline. It strikingly resembled young plants of dwarf Alberta spruce, which is, of course, derived from *Picea glauca*; whereas, my plant was derived from *P. pungens*. It differed from dwarf Alberta only in that in the winter it



Photos 1, 2, and 3. Three *Picea pungens* witches' broom seedlings which closely resemble young plants of the dwarf Alberta spruce, *Picea glauca* 'Conica'. Picture number 2, depicting the oldest of the three, has a genuine dwarf Alberta in the background.

took on a dull, greenish yellow color, which did nothing to enhance its beauty. Be that as it may, there are two others which look essentially the same but have a good green color all winter. Without consulting any nomenclature experts, I have temporarily named them *P. pungens* "Albertoid Nos. 1, 2 and 3." These are unacceptable names but they serve the purpose. It is too early to tell whether they will acquire the conical shape that is the hallmark of the dwarf Alberta. It can be seen from the photo of the oldest that it may not become a perfect little cone. It is already somewhat irregular at the top.



Two *Picea abies* witches' broom seedlings bearing a strong resemblance to the dwarf Alberta spruce

Through the courtesy of Al Forinash, I seem to have also acquired *Picea abies* witches' broom seedlings which are "Albertoid". Al kindly sent me the cones from a *P. abies* witches' broom which he was given to graft. Of the forty seedlings, two appear to be "Albertoid" (Figures 4 and 5). One can only guess as to their appearance as mature plants. For these *P. pungens* and *P. abies* seedlings to ever attain the popularity of *P. glauca* 'Conica', they will not only have to develop a desirable shape, color and texture when mature, but also and equally important, be

easily propagated by cuttings. It seems unlikely that plants with *P. abies* or *P. pungens* genes would suffer winter burn or become infested with red spider, two problems which plague the dwarf Alberta.

If anyone out there has witches' broom seedlings which are not *P. glauca* but which resemble the dwarf Alberta, it would be of interest to know their fate. Did they mature into attractive little trees?

*About the author:* Clark West is a member of the ACS who gardens in Harrison, Ohio. His garden is open by appointment to ASC members.



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# TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ACS 2008 NATIONAL MEETING

by Gary Whittenbaugh

That's right, members; it's your twenty-fifth anniversary. I know you wouldn't miss your twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, and you don't want to miss the ACS anniversary either. This will be a great opportunity to hear from those who were there at the beginning and to learn about the "roots" of the American Conifer Society.

The Central Region will be hosting the meeting held June 26–29, 2008. The meeting headquarters (now hang on to your hats) will be Dubuque, Iowa. Did I hear a "say what!" out there in conifer land?

Maybe this will help for those who don't know what or where this Iowa is. The word "Iowa" comes from a Native American word meaning "beautiful land." Iowa is also known as "The Land Between Two Rivers." Technically, it's between three rivers: the mighty Mississippi on the east, the Missouri, and a bit of the Big Sioux on the west. It's the only state where rivers mark the entire eastern and western borders.

I hope many of you will plan some vacation time when you come. Iowa's scenic areas are very user friendly. There are many things to visit, but I have picked out several Web sites for you to check. The Loess Hills (pronounced Luss), which are wind blown soil deposits and form Iowa's "front range," are truly unique. Only one other place in the world has some

thing equal to this – Shaanxi, China ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loess\\_Hills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loess_Hills)).

Among the many scenic areas in eastern Iowa are the Mines of Spain, Pikes Peak (Iowa version), and the Yellow River Forest. Maybe the most spectacular, however, is the Effigy Mounds National Monument. More than 2,500 acres and more than 200 mounds are preserved intact, many in the shapes of bears and birds. The area is on high bluffs overlooking the river. The scenery is magnificent (<http://www.nps.gov/efmo/>)! It truly is a **beautiful land!**

If this celebration were the only thing that was going to happen, it would be reason enough to attend, but we also have planned interesting, informative speakers and visits to great gardens.

Now the question: Do they have any conifers there? When you come (**none of this "if you come" nonsense; you're coming**), I think you will be in awe of the conifer collections and gardens you will visit at this meeting. Of course Iowa has conifers!

#### Correction:

In the last issue, it was noted that Rich Larson with the Dawes Arboretum had been selected as a Corresponding Member of the Royal Horticultural Society Advisory Panel on Conifer Registration. This should have read Ethan Johnson with the Holden Arboretum had the honor of being selected. Both Rich Larson and Susan Martin are assisting Ethan in this worthy effort.

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# The Florida *Torreya* and the Atlanta Botanical Garden

by David Ruland

Conservation is a key focus in the mission of the Atlanta Botanical Garden. This is reflected in various projects abroad and in heavy emphasis on the plants and habitats in our own southeast. Native pitcher plants (*Sarracenia* sp.), elusive orchids, exotic tropical conifers, even poison dart frogs are all addressed within our conservation mission. One species that truly exemplifies the dedica-

tion and commitment of our native conservation program is the Florida *torreya*. This article will offer an overview of the Florida *torreya* in terms of its history and horticulture as well as conservation efforts by the Atlanta Botanical Garden in conjunction with other institutions.

*Torreya taxifolia* is an ancient species belonging to the primitive yew family. Depending on the source, it is



*Torreya taxifolia* at Atlanta Botanical Gardens

either a member of the yew family (Taxaceae) or cast further into the subcategorized plum-yew family (Cephalotaxaceae). It is the type species of the genus. The other North American species in the genus is *Torreya californica*. There are several Asian species including *T. nucifera* from Japan and *T. fargesii* from China. Florida torreya is a conically shaped, evergreen tree that once reached heights of 40 to 50 feet (12-15m) with a trunk diameter of almost two feet (.6m). The needles are a beautiful dark green with white undersides and are extremely sharp to the touch.

In fact, this tree can hold its own against even the most spiteful *Araucaria araucana* (Monkey-puzzle tree) when it comes to piercing foliage. One's bare hands and arms will certainly suffer painful scratches and irritation if working closely with this plant without suitable protection. When bruised or broken, the foliage exudes a particularly pungent odor. Although the common name "stinking cedar" is often attributed to this characteristic, some believe the "stink" may have originated from the odor of decomposing seed pulp. At the height of this species' abundance and even in smaller numbers, the stench would exceed even that of the infamous ginkgo. The cones develop in early spring with male and female structures forming on separate individuals. The female cones take approximately 18 months to develop into a large nutmeg-like seed, reaching maturity in the fall of the following year. The seed is covered in a fleshy pulp called the sarcotesta, much like that in Podocarpus, ginkoes and cycads.

*Torreya taxifolia* was discovered in the 1830's by Hardy Bryant Croom who

named it for botanist John Torrey of New York. Its natural range is noted by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as the "Coastal plane of the extreme southwestern Georgia (only recorded from one county), along Lake Seminole, and the adjacent Florida panhandle along the uppermost stretches of the Apalachicola River" (Patrick et al, 1995). While this is a truly restricted range, this hasn't always been the case. According to fossil records, the Florida torreya is estimated to be over 165 million years old. Like many other conifers with such an impressive age, it was once scattered throughout the northern hemisphere.

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*The Florida torreya is a  
glacial relic, seemingly  
stranded in an increasingly  
hostile niche without any  
natural means of escape  
or survival.*

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Scientists theorize the species was driven south by glaciers that once covered the northern latitudes. When the glaciers retreated, the Florida torreya was left isolated in small microhabitats of the southeastern United States, where it thrived for thousands of years. These habitats currently consist of beech/magnolia/pine forests that cover the slopes and ravines along the Apalachicola River in Florida and adjacent Lake Seminole in Georgia. The forest canopy offers filtered sunlight during the summer and obviously higher light in the winter. The torreya trees are usually found in steephead ravines grow-

ing in rich sandy/limestone soils. Water seepage and cool moist air are apparently preferred by the Florida torreya.

Although left to a tiny fragment of its former range, the population in the Apalachicola River range was once estimated at over 600,000 individuals! In 1914, botanist Roland Harper listed it as one of the region's most abundant trees. The torreya thrived and became an important economic plant. Most of the large trees were harvested during the first half of the twentieth century for a variety of uses. Torrey wood is remarkably rot resistant and has been used for fence posts and shingles as well as for fuel for riverboats along the Apalachicola.

Late in the 1950's the Florida torreya experienced a severe population crash. By the early 1960's, scientists discovered that almost all of the adult trees had been

killed by a fungal blight that caused lesions and death of the leaves and stems. Many factors may have contributed to the decline of the Florida torreya such as repeated drought and the spread of an introduced soil pathogen (*Phytophthora cinnamoni*). It has also been surmised that a fungus which normally occurs in the bark of healthy plants may, as a result of environmental or physiological stress, stimulate production of various phytotoxins that subsequently harm the tree. While the exact cause of the decline has not been determined, most scientists believe that construction of Lake Seminole and logging contributed to the destruction of Florida torreya's habitat. Changes, such as altered water seepage patterns, increased sunlight, and fire suppression, further stressed a species already suffering from years of exploitation.

Today, the Florida torreya population is estimated to be around 200 individuals. With numbers this low, Florida torreya is one of North America's most critically endangered trees. These individuals are confined to a few counties in northern Florida mostly along the limestone bluffs of the Apalachicola River and one county in southwestern Georgia in the hardwood ravines bordering Lake Seminole. The existing trees are either root sprouts or stump shoots from old trees felled by disease or logging. Since most Florida torrey trees in the wild no longer reach maturity, they seldom form seed to reproduce. Unfortunately, it may only be matter of time when the roots, compromised by decades of hindered photosynthetic energy, fail to support any attempts at new growth. Such a turn of events would certainly catapult this species from critically endangered status to extinct in the wild.



*Torrey taxifolia* at Cox Arboretum,  
Canton, Georgia

In November of 1989, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, through the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC), initiated ex situ conservation efforts for *Torreya taxifolia*. This followed recommendations laid out in the recovery plan written for this species when it was listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act as “endangered” in 1984. Along with other collaborators, such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and university researchers studying the fungal disease, the Arnold Arboretum spearheaded the collection of over 2,000 cuttings from 166 trees at 14 individual sites in order to secure and propagate genetic material away from the infected populations (Nicholson et al, 1998). In 1990, the Atlanta Botanical Garden entered into a corporate agreement with the CPC to receive a full set of these indexed cuttings, including extra material from the Georgia populations. Many of these trees in cultivation no longer exist in the wild, increasing the importance of protecting this species ex situ.

Many of the original Arnold Arboretum cuttings have matured into cone and seed producing trees that, in total, form over 500 viable seeds per year on average. These plants are grown in the ABG “seed orchard” and propagules produced from these seeds have been used to facilitate the next phase in the recovery of this species. During the development stage, small custom-made wire cages enclose the seed. These cages serve as a deterrent to the omnipresent grey squirrel, who can swiftly and efficiently remove every last seed if left to his own devices.

The seed coat turns a greenish maroon when ripe and sloughs off readily. Once the pulp is removed and the seed cleaned, they are ready for immediate

sowing. It is preferable to sow the seed in slightly raised outdoor beds, preferably in September while the soil is still warm and moist. The outdoor beds are preferable to pots because they offer better insulation and protection from excessive drying and temperature extremes. The seed are planted only an inch or so below the surface. After a winter dormancy, they germinate the following spring. The seedlings are potted up in a special mix consisting of composted pine bark, blended with granite sand and amended with lime and bone meal, as well as perlite and charcoal for drainage. These plants are then grown in a private outdoor nursery until ready for outplanting.

In 2002 ABG initiated a collaborative project with Florida State Park Service that involved reintroduction of seedlings into ravines at Torreya State Park (TSP) where *Torreya taxifolia* has been extirpated. Surveys have been completed which show the location of all living *T. taxifolia* individuals on TSP property. Great efforts are made to ensure that introduced plants are not planted in ravines where existing plants occur. The plants are bare-rooted prior to placing in the native soil. Four treatments are used on the outplantings: fungicide, fertilizer only, fertilizer and lime, and control. These experimental transplants will help determine the optimal treatment, if any, that is needed for future success reintroducing this species. A total of 200 seedlings have been outplanted in TSP and the survival rates so far are encouraging.

Despite the successes of the conservation program, the Florida torreyia faces a long road ahead to recovery. Even if wild populations were capable of produc-

ing viable seed, the Florida torreya would seem incapable of expanding its limited range due to a lack of a natural dispersal agent. The aforementioned squirrel has proven to be capable of seed dispersal but almost certainly is not the original prime disperser. It was most likely a large extinct animal, although speculation on such matters in the plant world is endless.

The concern over the Florida torreya's inability to reclaim its former habitats has given rise to a movement among conservationists called "assisted migration." The basic idea is to see populations of *T. taxifolia* moved further north into more hospitable climates. It would be encouraged to integrate naturally, thereby securing the tree in the wild again. *Torreya taxifolia* does thrive in areas such as Asheville, North Carolina and even much further north. Indeed, as is the case with many types of plants, the cool night/warm day temperature differential would seem to be conducive to a healthier tree. The Atlanta Botanical Garden is not a proponent of such measures. It is prudent to establish safe-guarded populations in cooler climates within the confines of cultivated or human disturbed areas, not in pristine natural habitats. Therefore these plants can be further evaluated in a botanical garden setting and seed development encouraged without creating further ecological disturbance.

The Florida torreya is a glacial relic, seemingly stranded in an increasingly hostile niche without any natural means of escape or survival. This tree would certainly be doomed without the intercession of concerned individuals and institutions. Its existence is ensured by their dedication and tireless efforts. Hopefully through education, the general public will

come to know and share concern regarding the plight of this tree and its shifting habitat as well as that of countless other imperiled species. The Florida torreya is a wonderful, stately conifer. It deserves recognition and may one day find a home in many private gardens and collections. Just don't try to pet the foliage.

I would like to thank Carol Denhof, former conservation coordinator of the Atlanta Botanical Garden, for her invaluable help offered in the writing of this article. I would also like to thank Ron Determann for his support, knowledge, and enthusiasm for all things conifer and conservation related.

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*About the author:* David Ruland, of the Atlanta Botanical Garden, is a member of ACS.

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Fall	Oct/Nov/Dec 31	Aug 13	Oct 15

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# A Journey to See *Cathaya argyrophylla*

by William A. McNamara

*The following is an excerpt from a story written by William A. McNamara and published in Pacific Horticulture in 2001 titled "Three Conifers South of the Chang" about an expedition to China in 1996 with Mark Flanagan, Keep of the Gardens, Windsor Great Park; Tony Kirkham, Head of the Arboretum of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; and Lord Howick, Director of the Howick Arboretum. Reprinted with permission from Pacific Horticulture ([www.pacifichorticulture.org](http://www.pacifichorticulture.org)).*

Two more long days driving through never-ending mountains and crossing countless rivers brought us to Nanchuan in southeastern Sichuan. We stopped in Pinzhi for the night on the way and were given rooms on the third floor of a dirty hotel overlooking the Wujiang River. While cleaning seed before dinner, Tony and Mark noticed that their bathroom sink drained on to the floor without plumbing and after that, didn't drain very well through a small hole in the wall. Not too concerned and used to plumbing being not quite right in rural China, we casually went off to dinner despite the fact that their faucet didn't shut off entirely. While we were eating in the hotel's dining room, a rather large rat, which appeared to be drunk, bumped into Charles' foot and nonchalantly sauntered away. The filthy floor made its search for scraps easy. Rats and the kitchens and dining rooms of rural hotels in China have a great working relationship. When we got back to our rooms, Tony's and Mark's had filled up with more than five centimeters (two inches) of water. Without hesitation, the sensible hotel manager

quickly moved Tony and Mark up a floor and simply locked the door to their old room. We, of course, stayed in the room next to the flooded one and woke up periodically during the night wondering if the walls would collapse. In the morning a large poisonous snake, found in a room on the first floor, further amused us. Two men noisily chased the poor snake with broomsticks around the room and eventually succeeded in bashing its head in as we watched from the window. We were quite happy to move on to Nanchuan.

Our final goal was to reach the Jinfu Shan, the mountainous home of the extraordinary conifer *Cathaya argyrophylla*. This monotypic genus was discovered by Chinese scientists in 1955 in southeastern Sichuan and has since been found growing in parts of Hunan, Guangxi, and Guizhou. It is in the family Pinaceae and prefers limestone outcroppings in areas of heavy summer rainfall. It is extremely rare in cultivation.

Nanchuan is a small city just north of the Jinfu Shan range. After a good night's rest in a fairly decent hotel, we eagerly headed to the jeeps for the drive up

into the Jinfu Shan. To our surprise, blocking the gate to the hotel were at least a dozen people arguing with Dr. Yin and Prof. Zhong. Apparently several of them were determined to keep us from visiting the *Cathaya*. There was a representative from the local police, the local tourist bureau, the forestry department, the public security bureau, the Chinese army, the mayor's office, and who knows what else. Everyone was yelling and throwing their arms up in the air. Finally, they agreed that we could go see the trees but stated emphatically that we would not be allowed to touch or photograph them. At this point, the argument was on the verge of getting seriously out of control. Dr. Yin then made a phone call to the governor who told the troublemakers that we could indeed visit and photograph the valuable resource Yinshan, the Chinese name for *Cathaya argyrophylla*, because we were important scientists from England and America.

Two and a half hours later, our jeeps, with an escort of six Chinese to keep us under control, were climbing up steep,



mist-covered mountains. We stopped at about 1,700 meters (5,577 feet) elevation in an area of dense bamboo. Thick cloud cover had reduced visibility to about 20 meters (66 feet). We then hiked in a light rain for about 20 minutes, slightly uphill, to a large limestone outcrop about 15 meters (49 feet) high and wide. Our Chinese escorts pointed to the top of the outcrop and said, "There they are." Through the mist we could barely make out several conifers growing on the top. As we stood there wondering if they would let us climb up to view them closer, we noticed that someone had already rendered that nearly impossible. Everywhere that it might have been possible to climb, the limestone outcrop had been altered to prevent that possibility. Cracks that might have been footholds had been filled in with concrete; rough areas that might have served as grips were smashed smooth; and in areas of easy accessibility, barriers of rock and concrete had been installed. Someone was undoubtedly determined to keep people away from the *Cathaya*. As we looked around, clearly frustrated and not trying very hard to disguise it, the Chinese surprised us all by picking up a small fallen tree and leaning it against the outcrop. They then found another similar log and together with the other, they created a makeshift ladder. Several minutes later, after pushing and pulling each other up onto the top of the outcrop, we were standing in a grove of *Cathaya*. Our hosts further surprised us by telling us that it was all right to climb the trees and to take an herbarium specimen. The dozen or so trees averaged about 10 meters (33 feet) in height and superficially resembled short-needled pines. The few cones seen had already



dropped their seeds. They were growing with linderas, cotoneasters, enkianthus, and rhododendrons. After a good half hour of climbing, examining, and photographing the trees, we slowly made our way back down the outcrop. The rain intensified as we walked back to the road. While getting into the jeeps, our escorts told me that I was the first American to



see *Cathaya argyrophylla* in the wild. Though very suspect of that statement and rather cold and wet, I was nonetheless very happy to have seen, photographed, and even climbed a *Cathaya*.

During the long drive back to Nanchuan, we spotted one of the biggest troublemakers from the fiasco at the hotel that morning in a ditch with his jeep. Apparently, in an attempt to keep up with us on our way into the mountains, his driver had lost control around one of the many dangerous curves. We smiled as our drivers sped by refusing to offer help. Later that night the governor came by our hotel to apologize for any inconvenience that we had experienced during our visit to Nanchuan and the Jinfu Shan. "You are warmly welcome to visit again," he said, echoing a perennial refrain heard all over China.

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*About the author:* Bill McNamara is a member of the ACS. He is Executive Director of the Quarryhill Botanical Garden in Glen Ellen, California ([www.Quarryhillbg.org](http://www.Quarryhillbg.org)). Quarryhill is committed to the conservation, study, and cultivation of the temperate flora of Asia.

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# A California Conifer Conundrum

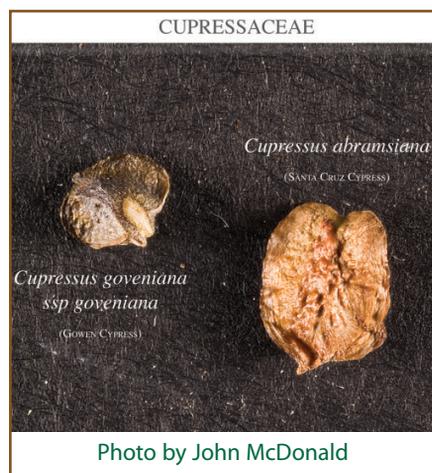
by Tim Thibault

California is recognized as one of the world biodiversity hotspots. That is about where agreement stops on the botany and conservation biology of California native plants. Various experts list around 6000 to over 8000 taxa, or different kinds of plants, occurring in the wild in California (California Native Plant Society 2007, Ertter 2000, Hickman 1993, Tibor 2001). To complicate matters, an estimate by Barbara Ertter (2000) suggests that as much as 5% of our flora is still undescribed in the scientific literature. Endangered plant estimates vary from under 200 (California Department of Fish and Game 2007) to over 2000 (California Native Plant Society 2007).

Consensus is just as difficult to achieve when narrowing the focus to conifers. At one extreme, the California Native Plant Society (California Native Plant Society, 2007) lists 19 taxa of conifers with conservation concern. The federal government recognizes two taxa, one as endangered and one as threatened, while the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources—the World Conservation Union and the State of California list only one species as endangered (California Department of Fish and Game 2007, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources 2006).

Of course, the federally listed conifers would be in the taxonomic hailstorm that is the genus *Cupressus*. *Cupressus goveniana* ssp. *goveniana*, the Gowen cypress, and *Cupressus abramsiana*, the Santa Cruz cypress, have only

been described as separate species only since 1948. Carl Wolf (1948) sounds almost apologetic naming *Cupressus abramsiana*, stating that “failure to recognize *Cupressus Abramsiana* as a separate species would make it impossible to retain *C. Sargentii* as distinct from *C. Goveniana*. Then too, *C. pygmaea* should be reduced to *C. Goveniana*.” Wolf (1948) adds that several other species complexes within the genus would also need to be reduced to single species. Many of the changes that Wolf hesitated to make are now realized, including merging *C. pygmaea* as a subspecies of *C. goveniana* (Hickman, 1993). Fifty-five years later, John Silba went the other direction (International Plant Names Index 2007), splitting *C. abramsiana* into four subspecies, while at the generic level Damon Little (2006) moved all California *Cupressus* into the genus *Callitropsis* after analysis of three genes and a host of morphological characteristics. It may be



best to stick with common names until the scientific community reaches consensus at least on the genus of these plants!

Setting the taxonomic problems aside, Gowen cypress and Santa Cruz cypress are very similar, but the two can be distinguished. They have different shapes and their seeds are readily distinguishable, but it is easiest to tell them apart by geography.

Gowen cypress comes from Monterey County at the south end of Monterey Bay. The main populations are on eroded coastal terraces inside the famous 17-Mile Drive. The S.F.B. Morse Botanical Reserve was founded there to protect the Gowen cypress. The plants look like pre-bonsai subjects in the wild or the garden. Their growth is rangy with irregularly spaced branches. The cones have some variability in shape as well, from rounded to oblong. They can be precocious as evidenced by a specimen at the S.F.B. Morse Botanical Reserve, coning at a mere seven inches. Gowen cypress seeds are dark brown and relatively small in comparison to Santa Cruz cypress.

Santa Cruz cypress grows north of Monterey Bay in Santa Cruz County with an outlying population in San Mateo County. Santa Cruz cypress holds the distinction of being the only cypress native to California to be listed as endangered by IUCN- as *C. goveniana* var. *abramsiana*. The main populations are currently protected on public lands in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Santa Cruz cypress holds its perfect pyramidal form in the wild as well as in the garden. A few of the oldest and tallest plants at the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve are just beginning to round at the top, somehow appropriate with an Ice Cream Grade Road address. While Santa Cruz cypress seems shier about coning than Gowen cypress,

it has better fragrance, as a walk past a specimen will demonstrate. Sean Hogan of Cistus Nursery and I once stood like wine connoisseurs describing the nuances of orange, rose and peppermint as we enjoyed the foliage of a stand of Santa Cruz cypress in the garden. Santa Cruz cypress seeds are orangish-tan, larger and more pleated than Gowen cypress.

The Gowen cypress and Santa Cruz cypress are only two of the nine California native cypress taxa listed by CNPS as having conservation concern. Seven of the nine are on CNPS list 1B as "Rare or Endangered in California and Elsewhere." Of those seven, conifer hobbyists are certainly familiar with *Cupressus macrocarpa*, the Monterey cypress. Monterey cypress is the windswept poster child of every central California Chamber of Commerce. Curiously, the natural range is very restricted within Monterey County and the California Invasive Plant Council (2007) lists Monterey cypress as a native invasive for naturalizing coastal prairie, desert scrub and riparian habitats outside Monterey County! Whether endangered or invasive, the "macrocarpa", or large cones, displayed along the run of the branch helps distinguish the plant. The foliage is variable and generally a rich green, although there are several golden selections.

Depending on your taxonomic authority of choice, *Cupressus arizonica* ssp. *nevadensis*, the Piute cypress, and *Cupressus forbesii*, the Tecate cypress, become one or two more cypresses that could inspire tourism to California. Both share a beautiful, cherry-red bark at maturity. The Piute cypress hails from the rich botanical convergence that is the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The massive trunks of wild populations of

Piute cypress at Bodfish are a sight to behold. The bluish foliage of Piute cypress and more upright habit separate it from the greener and broader Tecate cypress found in the Peninsular Ranges of southern California and northern Baja.

The Gowen cypress discussed above and *Cupressus goveniana* ssp. *pigmaea*, the pygmy cypress, appear to be separated primarily by a few hundred miles. The wild populations of pygmy cypress growing in the pygmy forests of the coastal terraces of Mendocino County are certainly worth seeking out for any conifer enthusiast. The pygmy forests hold two unique conifers, *Pinus contorta* ssp. *bolanderi*, the Bolander pine, as well as the pygmy cypress. The coastal terraces where they grow have thin, highly acidic soils and the pygmy forests at Van Damme State Park feature stunted plants struggling to perhaps eight feet tall over a century or more. Interpretive signage at the park mentions that a ring count on a quarter-inch caliper tree found it to be an octogenerian. In the garden, pygmy cypress grows much larger than it does in the wild, with a 13-year-old specimen at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden already overtopping its wild grandparents. Elsewhere in the garden, a Gowen cypress and pygmy cypress planted close to each other within two years are almost exactly the same size.

While there is no substitute for appreciating conifer species in the wild, that is not always practical or possible. Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and the other members of the Center for Plant Conservation network seek to conserve wild populations of endangered plants, whatever names taxonomists may apply to them at the moment, and provide an opportunity for plant lovers to see a multitude of geographically scattered taxa in

the space of a few hours' walk. Conifer enthusiasts can help their favorite species by supporting their local public garden or sponsoring conservation of a species through the Center for Plant Conservation.

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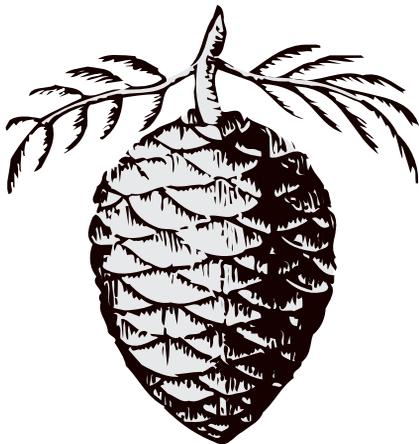
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*About the author:* Tim Thibault is Curator of the Living Collection at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. He is a proud graduate of Washington State University and a member of the ACS. He grew up in eastern Washington, developing his love of conifer species as a child in the forests of his home state.

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## American Conifer Society Announces International Trip In 2008

Next summer the ACS will offer an International Trip to Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. This trip was originally slated for the United Kingdom but based on feedback from a number of members, the Board of Directors voted to change it.

For the past month, we've been working with representatives in the aforementioned countries and are close to completing an itinerary that promises to offer something unique. As of this writing, it appears that this will be scheduled for middle August 2008. We are looking at between 12 to 14 days in duration.

In a perfect world, planning for this would have commenced at least 12 months ago as there is much in the way of logistics that has to be sorted through. On the plus side, we have a number of well-connected representatives in each country and all are enthusiastic. We will be well received and the gardens appear to be spectacular. This trip promises a good mix of eastern European culture, hospitality, and great gardening experiences.

I apologize at the paucity of details at this time. You will receive a detailed account, either in the next CQ or in a special mail-out. Since there will be no post tour after our National meeting, this trip will not compete.

Tom Cox

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**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.**

# Collectors Conifer of the Year

The Collectors Conifer of the Year committee is delighted to announce this year's two winning selections for the Collectors Conifer of the Year, dwarf and full-size selections!

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

## The Birth of 'The Blues'

Of all the plants Larry Stanley of Boring, Oregon, has introduced over his long career, perhaps none is so closely associated with this enthusiastic plantsman than this year's full-size selection for the Collectors Conifer of the Year, *Picea pungens* 'The Blues'. We'll let Larry tell the story:

While delivering plants from one of my first crops as a nurseryman to Iseli Nursery, I saw two *Picea pungens* 'Glauca Pendula' in 15-inch cedar boxes on either side of the office door. The plants were 4-5 feet high.

After staring at them for awhile, and with Jean (pronounced John) Iseli within earshot, I said "Are those two plants for sale?"

He looked back at me with a twinkle in his eye and said, "Yes."

I said, "How much?"

Jean grinned and said, "\$250.00 apiece."

Being the cocky little rooster (not Larry's original wording) I was back then, and only making \$3.50 an hour, I said I would take them. My plan was to

take 50 scions of each plant to make 100 grafts the first year and make my money back at \$5.00 a piece. Don Howse was vice president of the nursery back then and facilitated my purchase.

Of these first original 100 plants, 7 of them were quite different. We grew the plants on instead of selling them until they got to 3-gallon size. At that time, my wife had been visiting nurseries with me and had noted how nurserymen named plants after their mothers or wives. So instead of a lot of grief, I named the plant 'Marlene's Weeper'.

We think the plant was a sport of one limb. In fact, the original plant is 15 feet tall with a very cascading side. We have never taken wood from that plant since the first scion. Most 'Glauca pendula' grow upright with large shoulders and the needles radiate around the stem with needles all even in length. This new cultivar will not grow erect without staking. The plant wants to go horizontally and mounding. The needles are smaller on the stem as it reaches the end of the stem. This will be found on every plant of 'The Blues'. Five of the original plants are still in our sight, one being in the Oregon Gar-

den. At the nursery, we have 100 planted in a row, with the plant reaching 5-6 ft.

Now to the important part: How did the plant change its name? I was in Chicago with my wife (Marlene), Jan Groendorst (third generation Dutch nurseryman), and Cindy Peace. We had gone out for the night to see some Jazz and Blues (and just get ripped) after our day at the Mid-Am Show. Well, as usual, the two nurserymen didn't listen to the music but instead talked business all night. Jan said I needed a better name to market my new tree. He gave me examples of material that had been just introduced in Holland. Later at home, and with the full consent of Marlene, the plant finally got its name 'The Blues'.



'The Blues', like all *Picea pungens* varieties, is widely adaptable, requires full sun, and is hardy to Zone 2.

### *Picea abies* 'Pusch'

Have you ever heard of the "flowering spruce"? *Picea abies* 'Acrocona' has often been called this because of the profusion of bright magenta-red cones that

emerge at its branch tips in early spring. The effect is so startling that people have been known to burst out laughing when they see a good sized specimen in "full bloom" looking very much like a Christmas tree! In 1975, a man by the name Pusch (sorry, we don't know more about him) of Werder in the German Democratic Republic found a witches' broom growing on an 'Acrocona' that we are now pleased to offer as this year's dwarf selection for the Collectors Conifer of the Year. *Picea abies* 'Pusch' is a charming miniature of 'Acrocona' that grows only an inch or two a year with an estimated size at 10 years of only 11 inches high by 16 inches wide, growing in an irregular, flattened shape. *Picea abies* is a durable workhorse in the landscape trade, and 'Pusch' should perform well in all parts of the U. S. where this species is currently employed. It is hardy to Zone 3, will perform well in full sun to partial shade, and likes slightly acid soils. This is a perfect accompaniment to the rockery, trough garden, or just about anywhere this florid little 'tough guy' can strut his stuff!



# History of the American Conifer Society

## – Part One

by Jim Morris

*Early this year I was writing an article for our county history journal and the story required researching how a *Calocedrus decurrens* would have arrived in Georgia in the 1830's. Seeking information from the American Conifer Society introduced me to your President, Tom Cox, and the lovely Evelyn Cox, editor of this publication. During that interaction I wandered too near, was sucked into the boundless energy vortex surrounding them, and ended up being recruited as your ACS historian. "No pressure, but, by the way, this year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ACS and you need to tell the membership what we are celebrating!" Protesting that I literally do not know a *Tsuga* from a *Pinus* seemed meaningless to them – I had some research skills, time to spare, and a willingness to listen to others. Since then I have dived into the minutes and other records of the ACS Board of Directors, read a good many of the American Conifer Society Bulletins, the predecessor of the Conifer Quarterly you are reading, and have begun interviewing folks who have far more information about ACS than I. Between now and the 2008 ACS Annual Meeting, I hope to write an article for each issue of the Conifer Quarterly with the objective of telling you some stories about how the Society got started and what it has accomplished over this quarter-century. Though today's story is about the founders' efforts to start the organization, I hope not to tell a linear story in the future editions. Subsequent articles will highlight some issues on which the Society has made a difference in the conifer community, and may highlight a few of the people who propelled us to succeed. If I mess up, or if you have an angle I should know about for the next article, call or email me – I'm in the ACS Membership Directory.*

**I**n October 1982, a group of enthusiasts gathered at the home of Joel Spingarn on Long Island and determined to start a dwarf conifer society. They divided into two committees. One was chaired by Robert Fincham and was tasked to draft the society's name, purpose and bylaws. He was assisted by Ted Lockwood, Harold Epstein, Layne Ziegenfuss, Michael Collins, Michael Kristick, Ridge Goodwin, and William and Maxine Schwarz. The second was the advisory

committee, chaired by Joel Spingarn, who was assisted by Ed Rezek, Joe Reis and Layne Ziegenfuss.

The groundwork was completed in December and the first meeting took place January 20, 1983, again at Spingarn's home. At that meeting the Board of Directors was appointed and included Ed Rezek, James Cross, Peter Deltredici, Jean Iseli, Richard Bush, Robert Fincham, Ted Lockwood, Susan Frost Martin, and Joel Spingarn.

The first president elected was Robert L. Fincham. Tom Dilatush was vice president (East) and Richard Bush was vice president (West). Jean Iseli was secretary and William Schwarz was treasurer.

American Conifer Society was accepted as the name of the organization and its purposes were stated as, “. . . 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.”

The four paragraphs immediately above are adapted from the first article in Vol. 1, No. 1 of the *American Conifer Society Bulletin*, an article written by Robert Fincham, the new president. And that is how we got started on the path to where we are today.

You can see that the interests of the group broadened to all conifers from the initial dwarf conifer society objective. There had been false starts in organizing similar groups in the past, undoubtedly inspired by the success of the 1931 Conifer Conference sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society of England. Subsequently, Col. Montgomery of Connecticut was only able to attract 40 potential members of a proposed society and withdrew. In 1939 three men attempted to start a hemlock society but nothing came of the effort. Why did ACS succeed?

One reason for our success may be the dogged determination of some of the founders. That, coupled with their willingness to assume personal responsibility for tasks necessary to get this fledgling organization up and running, made the difference. An example may be the first

president, Robert Fincham. No George Washington, he was the first, second, third and fourth President! He was willing to do the work and his companions respected his ability to get the work done. During his tenure, the Society grew from 200 members to 673. He was also the first editor of the *Bulletin*. Being a good leader, he knew how to delegate. The second editor was his wife, Diane. Even though he eventually turned over the presidency to another, his devotion to ACS continued. It is notable that during the ACS 2007 Annual Meeting in Seattle, he and Diane hosted members to a tour of their Coenesium Gardens.

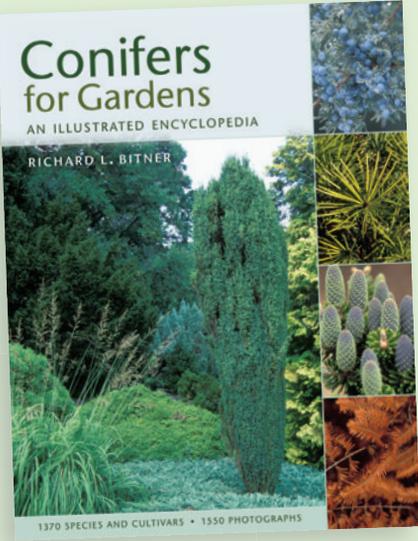
Jean (pronounced John) Iseli was on that first Board of Directors and you will recognize the name from the annual ACS Jean Iseli Memorial Award. The award is granted to an applicant who best supports, “the development, conservation and propagation of conifers,” essentially, the mission of this Society. The award was established shortly after the death of Jean in 1986. Jean’s brother, Andre, filled his vacant position on the Board and eventually served in many other capacities, including ACS President. The initial annual award was \$500 and came from a fund that totaled only \$9,120 in 1991 when the Board allowed Andre to take control of investment of the fund under the condition that he would personally guarantee the \$9,120 corpus of the fund. The annual award is now \$3,000 and is a testament to Andre’s commitment to ACS and to his brother’s memory.

Also on the original Board was Susan Frost Martin. The issue of *Conifer Quarterly* you are holding lists her as Technical Editor. She chaired the first annual meeting of ACS, eventually co-ed-

ited the *Bulletin*, chaired the Jean Iseli Award Committee, and served in innumerable other capacities for these 25 years. Her husband has supported ACS just as long, and now runs the national office.

This article cannot be exhaustive about those who drove ACS to succeed and I hope not to offend those whom I have not focused on. My thesis is that this organization was built on the hard work and dedication of a few who love conifers and devoted untold time and effort to preaching them to the rest of us. ACS is also nurtured by those loyal members who participate by attending

annual and regional meetings, those who teach and those who learn all things conifer, those who plant and transplant and develop and conserve and propagate, and even by those who kick back and relish reading the latest *Conifer Quarterly* in their high-rise condo without a foot of dirt to plant in. We have become the conifer big tent – there is room for all. But we should pay particular reverence for those founding members who started it all in 1983 and followed through in their various capacities. More about that next time when we concentrate on the publication you are holding and how it has developed over the years.



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## Paul Halladin Receives the ACS Annual Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers

The criteria for the Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers includes the collecting and displaying of conifers, willingness to share knowledge of plants, and enthusiasm and drive to discover and develop noteworthy cultivars. Also taken into consideration are published articles, books or texts as well as new or improved propagation techniques and designs for the use of conifers. This prestigious award is determined by the votes of previous award winners, making it the ultimate honor of being recognized by one's peers.

Paul has spent his entire post-graduate career as the chief propagator at Iseli Nursery Inc., in Boring, Oregon. He graduated from Oregon State University in 1979, and was hired by Jean Iseli at Iseli Nursery, Inc. in 1980. Paul is very knowledgeable in the field of conifers, and has gladly shared his knowledge and skill with other conifer enthusiasts. He is very attentive to detail, and has achieved a skill in propagation of conifers that is worthy of recognition. His ability to propagate conifers from rooted cuttings is especially noteworthy. With his attention to detail, he has exhibited strong propagation ethics, being careful to replicate plants that have been proved worthy, and maintaining high standards. He has developed good relationships with collectors all over the world, especially in Europe. Through his contacts, he has acquired rare and unusual conifers, many of which have then been released commercially. Many of Paul's introductions have been offered at the auction tables at the ACS National and Regional meetings. Paul served faithfully on the Board of Directors of the American Conifer Society, and recently has been a principal participant in the ACS Collectors Conifer of the Year program.

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## Maud Henne Receives the Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award of Merit for Dedicated Support of the American Conifer Society

*The Marvin and Emelie Snyder Award of Merit for Dedicated Support of the American Conifer Society recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the ACS 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 ACS organizationally or otherwise.*

**M**aud Henne became an active member of the ACS in 1985, following her husband's death, taking over his involvement and interest in gardening and especially in conifers. She immediately became involved with the Society and in 1995; she offered her assistance to Charlene Harris, who was then both *American Conifer Society Bulletin* editor and manager of the ACS national office. Maud soon took over the responsibilities of running the national office from 1996 to 2000. Maud organized the 2000 tour of Holland and Germany, a memorable excursion for those who participated. She also assisted with the planning of the national meetings, chairing the meeting in Maryland in 1998. She was instrumental in establishing the Southeastern Region, and has held several key offices of the Southeastern Region, including the presidency. During her tenure as presi-

dent of the region, the membership increased by 42%, or 78 members. Maud co-chaired the successful 2006 National Meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee. Maud has contributed articles to the *Conifer Quarterly*, and has produced annual calendars exhibiting her digital photography skills.

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# In Search of *Abies nebrodensis*

by Daniel Luscombe

One of the world's most threatened conifer species, *Abies nebrodensis*, is found only in one place on earth, the valley of Madonna degli Angeli in Italy. Only 29 remaining specimens of the original forest remain, all of which are restricted to a small area on Mt. Scalone in the Madonie Mountains in north-central Sicily. The species is currently listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) as Critically Endangered.

With the exception of a group of 15 documented trees recently planted at Dawyck Botanic Garden, United Kingdom, there are very few well-documented trees cultivated in Britain and Ireland, and clearly there is a need to broaden the genetic base of trees in cultivation.

In 2005, along with Sabina Knees from the Royal Botanic Gardens and Stephen Dury from Reading University, we set out to find it. We were excited about our mission to collect leaf samples for DNA extraction towards a phylogenetic study of *Abies* around the Mediterranean Basin and to collect seedlings from a nursery near Piano Zucchi for distribution throughout the United Kingdom using the ICCP network of "Safe Sites." We were also excited to visit Sicily, which has rich flora for an island of relatively small size. So far, 2,650 taxa have been recorded, with approximately 10 percent of these being endemic.

Gianniantonio (Gianni) Domina from Palermo Botanic Garden, Italy,

picked us up the first morning and drove us up to the Madonie Mountains where we met up with Rosario Schicchi, who is in charge of looking after the national park. Fortunately for Gianni, there was a four-wheel-drive truck to take us up the track to the top of the mountain where we could drop down into the valley of Madonna degli Angeli - the one place on earth *Abies nebrodensis* can be found. The lower slopes are planted with non-native trees for forestry purposes. We saw pines and cedars, although it seemed strange for a national park to have introduced non-native species.

Research has shown that the natural range of *Abies nebrodensis* was once much wider across the Madonie Mountains, but by 1900, it was thought to be extinct. This near-extinction was brought about by extensive felling for building and firewood. The tree was rediscovered in 1957, growing in a garden in Polizzi, Italy, a small town nearby. Further exploration in the mountains eventually brought the numbers up to thirty mature trees and thirty juveniles. Fortunately for the *Abies*, the local foresters realized the importance of this tree and gathered seed every coning year (only ten of the trees produce seed) since 1978. These are grown in a local nursery for ex situ planting. Many of these plants (more than 100,000) have been planted in selected sites across the Madonie Mountain range, both in the national park and in summer houses in the area. It has not been a great success. High summer temperatures, lack

of water, and harsh soil conditions make it very difficult for young plants to establish. A project by the EU LIFE fund is providing help by paying for compost for planting and watering during the summer months.

After an exhilarating ride up the mountain in the back of the truck, we passed through a grove of stunted *Quercus petraea* where we stopped and looked out over the valley. From this vantage point, we could see the whole habitat. The ground is covered in white rocks with small stands of trees. Lone specimens of *Abies nebrodensis* stick up like green witches' hats. Rosario pointed to the trees and said, "that is tree number 7, number 8, ..." as though they were his children. The main tree species in this area are *Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus petraea*, *Crataegus* sp. *Sorbus graeca*, *Ilex aquifolium*, and carpets of *Juniperus communis* var. *hemisphaerica*. Growing out of cracks between the rocks was *Cyclamen hederifolium* (possibly var. *confusum*) with beautiful purple flowers. At higher levels, the *Abies nebrodensis* grow in the open. Lower down, there are a few trees growing together in woodland. We stopped at one of the higher trees, and Rosario explained what they were doing to conserve the few remaining wild trees. Each tree is individually fenced off to stop damage from grazing animals. Even though grazing has been greatly reduced in the area, we could still hear the bells from some goats. Stonewalls have recently been built around the lower side of the trees to prevent erosion from around the roots, and the location of all the trees is recorded on GPS. An extensive survey has been made to find all of the seedlings, and these are recorded and measured an-

nually. Around the valley, we could see the barriers that had been put up to help control erosion. The numbers of visitors are carefully monitored, and visits are by appointment only!

In addition to grazing, another problem with the establishment of seedlings is that they seem to need a lot of shade when they are young. There is no shade around the lone specimens on the top of the mountain. We saw very few seedlings here, but on the trees growing lower down, as part of woodland, there were many more (relatively speaking).

Sabina made collections of a small number of needles for DNA sampling from all of the trees we passed. As we walked down the valley, we could see that the trees (mainly *Fagus*) had been coppiced extensively in the past. Rosario explained that this coppicing was for the production of charcoal and had since been stopped. Farther on, we passed the biggest, and probably oldest, wild *Abies nebrodensis*, estimated to be around 130 years old. Stephen had been to this area before and showed us a couple of shrubs of *Cotoneaster nebrodensis*, another rare endemic plant. Before we knew it, we had arrived at our pick up point, which marked the end of our visit. Looking back up the valley, you could still see the unmistakable shapes of the *Abies nebrodensis* and wonder at how rare it actually is.

Our next visit of the day was to the nursery where they raise all of the seedlings for ex situ plantings. The seedlings are sown in prepared beds outside (in shade) and then transferred to pots in the second year. We are not sure what is done with them after this time because there were only plants of this size

on the nursery. All of the plants are labeled according to which parent plant they came from. Our hosts were kind enough to give us seedlings from trees 11, 21, 22, and a ten-year-old plant that had lost its label. The ten-year-old plant was only about 10 cm high; this rate of growth is unusually slow for *Abies*. When we removed the plant from its pot, we found out why - almost the entire stem was buried by compost.

The final visit of the day was to see the old tree in Polizzi. This is quite a famous tree and had so many visitors over the years that the key to get in the garden is kept in the local patisserie. Unfortu-

nately for us, no one could seem to find it, so we could only view it over a wall. Sadly, this tree is not in very good condition and appeared as though it might be coming to the end of its natural life. It would be good to get some material off this tree for grafting and using DNA to see if it is genetically different to the trees in the mountains.

Gianni drove us back to Palermo, and after a quick shower, we went out to dinner with Professor Raimondo, one of the best and most admired botanists in Italy. It was a great way to end a fabulous day.



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# Happy Times in Seattle

Text by Evelyn Cox  
Photos by Jim Kelley

The 2007 National Meeting in Seattle was a blast from start to finish. The DoubleTree Hotel was well suited for our activities with meeting rooms conveniently clustered near entrance doors, the main elevator, and the front desk. This allowed many opportunities to see old friends and meet new ones as we crossed paths on the way to various activities. Many people took advantage of the nearby conifer eye-candy store to table-shop in advance of the auction.

The Northwest Region published a good list of public and private gardens, nurseries, and parks in the Seattle area. Many members arrived prior to the meeting start date or stayed after the event was over to take advantage of the bountiful list. By Thursday, the first night of the meeting, many of us were so tired from our pre-conference garden treks, we were ready for a good night's rest. By morning, though, we were eager to see more gardens.





Early on Friday and Saturday, we divided up into groups and headed out on buses to various garden venues and delightful lunches. The large number of attendees necessitated that day one gardens for some groups would be visited on day two by the remaining groups and vice versa. This made for leisurely, uncrowded wandering in each of the garden venues.

Our group started with Kubota Gardens, where we were greeted by Don Brooks who put the personal touch on the evolution of this wonderful, interesting garden. He explained that Kubota Gardens combines the Seattle style of gardening (blending east and west) with flamboyant colors. After passing through a huge gate of a conventionalized sun-

burst design, we stopped to enjoy an extensive water venue with black pools and waterfalls that Don implemented. The garden is so well-known for its beautiful rocks and stones that people donate special rocks they have or know about to the garden. When the time came to move on to the next garden, intrepid cone heads had to be rounded up to keep us, I mean them, from having to walk or taxi back to the DoubleTree.

At South Seattle Community College (SSCC), we were welcomed by Van Bobbitt, horticulture instructor and arboretum coordinator. This garden contains a unique collection of conifers, donated by Bob and Diane Fincham of Coenosium Gardens, as well as other rare and unique conifers in a five-acre arbore-

tum/classroom. Stone walls, paths, and other elements were built by landscape construction students attending SSCC. After our morning tour, we were treated to a gourmet brown bag lunch, prepared by students in the chef-in-training program at the school.

At Pack Forest, we were transported back to the summers of childhood as we lunched inside a log cabin, seated at long, shellacked wooden tables with attached benches. Excellent food was served cafeteria style, and there was lots of it, including hearty homemade soup and heavenly gooey apple cake. The walls of the cabin were covered with pictures of forestry history at this camp that had been used by the CCC, later by students at the University of Washington, and now as a conference center. Our guide told us some of the history of Pack Forest, including that reforestation techniques were practiced there as early as the 1930s. We then were taken by bus for a guided walk through an old-growth forest.



At Weyerhaeuser's Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection, we saw outstanding bonsai specimens, some in styles I had never heard of, like Pingjing and rock-

over-rock. Nearby, Joe Harris from Iseli Nursery had set up a working exhibit to show us how to prune bonsai. We ended our tour with a stroll through the 10,000 beautiful rhododendrons in the botanical gardens, which also hold some fine conifer specimens.

Bob Fincham welcomed us to his and Diane's jewel of a nursery in the foothills of the Cascades – Coenosium Gardens. Bob hand-picked this site to relocate his extensive conifer collection from the east to the west. In addition to having slopes and wetlands, it had a flat spot for a home.

We entered the garden and walked along a terrace bordered by mixed conifers, and then dropped down into the main garden. Walking past many, many conifer cultivars, we gradually walked back up the slope, ending up at a fire pit over which we roasted and enjoyed marshmallows and ate homemade goodies. Bob said his philosophy is to plant conifers and, when they get too big, chainsaw them. Oh, I almost forgot step two - propagate them before sawing!

All these beautiful and educational venues were surrounded by a backdrop of splendid conifer forests as we traveled from place to place. Snow-capped Mount Rainier, continually flirting with us along the way by appearing, disappearing, and sometimes just seeming to float in the distance, was the icing on the cake.

The daytime excitement was capped off at night by good food and speakers, silent and live auctions, and on our last evening, a relaxing, romantic dinner cruise around Seattle's famous harbor. The weather was perfectly matched to this evening. We were all wowed as the setting sun gave way to the rising moon,



and the glowing orange reflection from glass-covered buildings faded into millions of tiny lights. It was the perfect ending to a fabulous meeting.

Thank you Kathleen Pottratz, Brian Jacob, and all those volunteers who

showed us splendid Pacific Northwest hospitality and flora.

If you missed this excellent opportunity, other opportunities await you in Dubuque, Iowa. Mark your calendars for June 26–29, 2008.



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## Gardening with Conifers

### Watch Out for that Tree!

by Bruce Appeldoorn  
Photos by Patti Claridge

**P**each Knob is an extremely idyllic setting for a garden estate. Perched at the top of the ridge overlooking north Asheville, North Carolina, and the Blue Ridge Parkway, the bountiful land features a natural wealth of Appalachian wildflowers, mountain laurel, and native plants. Decorative rocks adorn the grounds as if to beckon one to use them creatively in the landscape. Indeed, that is what ACS members Patti Claridge and Stan Willett have done over the last 15 years. The property has become a unique testimonial to what can be accomplished when countless hours of love and devotion are lavished upon a site. The gardens are also a statement on why we all need a tractor or two! Stan swears by them.

The climate is very challenging. At ridge-top, howling winds, temperatures that can dip to -20 degrees or exceed 95 degrees, occasional heavy snow or ice, and this year's cataclysmic Easter freeze all help to keep life "interesting." It is this rigorous climate that stringently dictates what can and cannot be successfully grown there.

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### *So, what's a gardener to do?*

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Using largely their own labor, Stan and Patti cleared a home site and have constructed a beautiful modern home that so neatly slips into the mountain as to be

barely visible from a distance. They then began to turn their attention to the landscape. Conifers did not seriously enter the picture until about 2001, when experimentation began in earnest. Today, the collection and grounds contain more than 200 different cultivars, representing most of the non-tropical coniferous genera available, all strategically sited to take advantage of the many microclimates on the property. Tastefully integrated with hundreds of perennials, wildflowers, and blooming shrubs and trees, the gardens are impressive at any season of the year. From the mountaintop, the views are splendid and panoramic.

But, last year the North Carolina State Highway Patrol decided it was time to replace the aging nearby fifty-foot tall communications tower with a new one that would be three times that height. While the old tower was hidden from view by the mountain's existing foliage canopy, the new structure was blatantly obvious with an in-your-face appearance when entering or leaving the home via the winding driveway. Its presence was ominous and oppressive, a burdensome stamp of unwelcome technology upon a setting of otherwise pristine beauty. So, what's a gardener to do?

Patti and Stan approached me with this problem right after the construction of the tower was completed. Deciduous trees would not help in the wintertime when the structure was most noticeable. It would be up to the conifers. A hedge or screen was also not the answer, for the site would not allow its successful place-

ment between the home and tower. This would be a job for one large, majestic, and powerful tree strategically placed right in the middle of the existing driveway. This would need to be one plant that would be big enough to obscure the view of the tower, one that would survive the rigors of the mountain, and one that would save the day.

There were not many practical alternatives. Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) was a candidate, but this species is experiencing climatic drainage and insect problems at below 3,000 feet in elevation, and the site was at about 4,000 feet, so we regarded this choice as marginal. The heights available were also insufficient; we needed at least 35 feet. *Juniperus virginiana* was a possibility, definitely tough enough for the site, but it grew slowly and also was not available at a sufficient height. But large specimens of *Picea abies* (Norway spruce) were “locally” available, and we were able to locate a nurseryman in Newland, North Carolina, that could provide a tree, dug to order, in the spring.

We visited Sugar Mountain Nursery in early March, and after viewing more than 20 serious candidates on several different sites, a beautiful tree 42 feet in height was selected for digging. But the project was beset by a series of delays, and the tree was not dug until just before bud break in May. The tree was mechanically dug by a specialized large tree digger and transported the 90 miles from Newland by the same truck. The top of the tree was strapped forward over the cab of the truck, and with the 90-inch-diameter root ball, the height of the beast was a mere 48 feet - the size of a semi-trailer. Tarped and ready to go, the spruce

moved onto the highway, down the mountain, and then up the mountain again toward Asheville. Such a strange load turned the heads of many passers-by.

The weight of the spruce was about 17,000 pounds - not a plant to be installed by a shovel or two. Indeed, after relocating the driveway and removing the old blacktop at the installation site, Stan himself prepared the hole using two back-hoes working at cross angles to each other, so that rocks could be loosened by one hoe and removed with the other. The final excavation measured about 9 feet by 9 feet and was 6 feet deep. When standing in the bottom of the hole, I was almost invisible to bystanders. Guy wires were set in place to stabilize the tree from high winds: We were ready.



*With the new tower looming in the background, owner Stan Willett prepares the site by digging a very large planting pit right in the middle of his own driveway. The blacktop was subsequently removed and the driveway rerouted.*

But where was the tree? The highly specialized truck and digger experienced a mechanical breakdown in transit. A gas line had ruptured on the trip uphill. The tree inched up the mountain and found a resting site at the Asheville Mall, of all places, where it was unloaded, watered and cared for. After many attempts at repair, the injured transplanting truck was finally ready. It was almost seven, very warm, days later when the tree finally crawled up the last 1,800 feet in elevation above Asheville, snaked around the much-feared 180-degree hairpin turn, and arrived at Peach Knob. While a few lower branches had been broken, the tree was in surprisingly good health.



*The Norway spruce arrives and is backed up to the planting site after being untarped. Just how did that driver see for 90 miles, anyway? It's OK—only half the trip was on interstates.*

Unlike the transit difficulties, planting and guying went rather quickly. But an ongoing two-month-long local drought meant that watering by soaker hoses and buckets was mandatory and demanded much time and labor. Irrigation to the foliage was even more essential, and a hose with spray nozzle was



*The truck's massive hydraulic cylinders raise the tree above the hole. A second set of cylinders will lower the spruce into the planting pit. The tree weighs 17,000 pounds!*

affixed 30 feet up in a neighboring tree so that water would reach the leader. The spruce was liquid-fertilized and treated with Bioplex, a solution made of seaweed extracts, to help alleviate transplant shock.



*A worker begins to backfill the hole after the tree spade's huge blades have been retracted, leaving the rootball properly seated in the hole. The machine's yellow heavy metal frame stabilizes the tree during installation.*



*The installation crew completes the crowning and berming of the rootball. The tree will now be guyed into place with heavy wire cables, then mulched, watered and fertilized. Viola!*

As one can see from the pictures, the spruce is magnificent in this spot. The size of the existing neighboring trees keeps everything in proper scale, and the new addition does not stand out or dominate the site as one might expect.

We gardeners can get very excited about our new additions of one-gallon-sized, rare conifers. But this was one instance where only a large species-type conifer would fit all the criteria of site, budget, and intention. Stan and Patti are thrilled with the result. We all hope the tree will be very happy at Peach Knob for many years to come.

*About the author:* ACS member Bruce Appeldoorn has operated Appeldoorn Landscape Nursery since 1975. The nursery specializes in production of unusual landscape and garden conifers and fo-

cuses on residential design and installation in western North Carolina. Bruce served as ACS Southeastern Regional President from 1999–2001.



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## Letters To The Editor

**To: American Conifer Society**

**Re: *Could this be the world's biggest Dwarf Alberta Spruce?***

During the 1960's and 70's, masses of conifers, together with other winter-green species such as *Prunus lauracerasus*, *Pyracantha coccinea* and *Berberis verruculosa*, were planted in Swedish parks and gardens. The ambition at that time was to create constant green gardens that shouldn't need any maintenance. Today, we know much better. Many times, these plants were sold as small, slow growing specimens and were recommended for the small garden or beside the gravestone at the cemetery. Today, you can see many examples of huge plants, planted in places where they have grown too big for the space. But I think that none can compare to the enormous specimen of dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea glauca* 'Conica') growing in Karl-Evert Flinck's private arboretum in Bjuv in the south of Sweden.\*

Fifty years ago, a small plant of dwarf Alberta spruce was planted in Karl-Evert's garden and you can easily say that it has thrived pretty well there. Today, it measures roughly 8 meters (26 feet) in height and is almost 5 meters (16.5 feet) wide at the base of the tree.

So, my question is: Could this specimen of dwarf Alberta spruce be the biggest in the world? If you know any bigger, please let me know.

Henrik Sjöman  
Neversvagen 45  
224 79 Lunci Sweden



\* *Flinck Arboretum is one of the biggest private tree collections in Sweden and includes a big collection of magnolias, together with a great number of other plant groups, including conifers.*

## University of Tennessee Graduate Student Awarded the 2007 ACS \$1,000 Scholarship

by Gerald P. Kral

The ACS Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that this year's recipient is Andrew Pulte of Knoxville, Tennessee. Andrew is a graduate student in his second year at the University of Tennessee. He is also a teaching assistant in UT's Department of Plant Sciences and his major is Public Horticulture.

ACS members who attended the recent National Meeting in Seattle may have had the pleasure of meeting Andrew. The \$1,000 allowed Andrew to attend, paying for his travel, lodging, and registration. In his application, Andrew stated, "Having experienced the 2006 National, I could think of no better way to learn more about conifers than by attending a National ACS Conference. This would also be a great opportunity to find new conifer selections to add to the UT Gardens."

Andrew also applied last year, wanting to use the \$1,000 scholarship to label and catalog UT's rapidly growing conifer collection. Although not selected, Andrew still carried out some of his stated goals using the limited resources available through the UT Gardens. This speaks well of Andrew's integrity and keen interest in all things "conifer."

Andrew grew up working in the nursery business in Nebraska. He obtained his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska with a major in horticulture and a minor in communications. Andrew worked for the National Arbor Day Foundation and the Henry Dooly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska, before entering the master's degree program at UT. Part of his program requires that he teach a class on basic landscape plants with a primary focus on woody trees and shrubs. This class is required of all UT undergraduates, and the last half of his class stresses conifers. Andrew also is the volunteer coordinator for the UT Gardens and directs the work of 30 volunteers.

Receiving the ACS Scholarship requires Andrew to write an article for the *Conifer Quarterly* on his experiences at the National Meeting in Seattle. Readers can look forward to a unique perspective of our Seattle meeting in a future issue of the *CQ* as Andrew tells of his experiences and what the scholarship meant to his continuing education in horticulture.

Congratulations Andrew! We hope to hear much more about you as you continue to indulge your interest in conifers.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Richard L. Bitner Conifers for Gardens – an illustrated encyclopedia 424 pp., colour photographs on all pp. exl. index matter, 280 × 215 mm (11 × 8.5 in), hardbound green cloth + colour dust-jacket, Timber Press, Portland, Oregon 2007, ISBN 13:978-0-88192-830-3. US\$ 59.95 (£40)*

There are many illustrated books on cultivated conifers and they keep coming in a fairly steady stream; it is obvious that there is a market for such books. Some are little more than a picture gallery with a minimum of text, perhaps nice to browse through and see if you can spot the conifer you may have in your garden, but giving little more in the way of useful information. Reproduction of colour photographs has become relatively cheap and images from good digital cameras are now easy to put into print. For high quality however, only expensive 6 megapixels-or-above cameras will do, otherwise colour slide film is still preferred by publishers like Timber Press. The author of this book has used slide films for his 1550 published pictures and so do I. *Conifers for Gardens* is a book with pictures and text. It treats 1370 “species and cultivars” (dust jacket blurb); however, from a count of the Index there are only ca. 140 species (give or take a few synonyms) treated in the book, including *Ginkgo biloba*, which is by no systematic reckoning anywhere nearly related to conifers. The rest are indeed cultivars, which is of course appro-

priate for a book on garden conifers. The author is not a botanist or taxonomist and I shall therefore not criticize his book beyond the foregoing remark. He has famous precursors like Dallimore & Jackson and Krüssmann who all included poor lonely Ginkgo in their books on conifers, so why should he not do it, too?

After a brief Introduction, illustrated with views of gardens, the bulk of the book, *Encyclopedia of Garden Conifers* begins at p. 19. Taxa and their cultivars are treated alphabetically and the text is wrapped around the illustrations. Each genus and species has a short descriptive text in a narrative style, obviously not meant to be technical in any way but to give some general information and support the pictures and vice versa. There are other nice little titbits on habitat, uses of wood etc. and then a listing of cultivars with brief characteristics including growth and habit in the garden. Where species have many cultivars, these lists – with the accompanying pictures – become longer, but given the huge numbers of known cultivars, none are comprehensive. The author lives and worked on his book in the US and unsurprisingly there is a bias towards what is grown there. This is not bad; most books of this kind were done in Europe with a similar geographical bias. Although the book fits the Oxford Dictionary’s definition of an encyclopedia, it is not as comprehensive as were its aforementioned predecessors, which although now out-of-print or outdated or both, are still to be rivalled. What is new, of course, is the great number of colour photographs now possible

in such books. Despite these caveats, I think this book is still better than most such books produced in recent years and it offers plenty of information, as well as incentive, for all those who want to know more about the common or slightly less common conifers in gardens, or indeed for those who want to grow them.

Aljos Farjon, FLS

Honorary Research Associate

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**ACS member Walter Cullerton also reviewed Dr. Bitner's book:**

*Conifers for Gardens*  
An Illustrated Encyclopedia by  
Richard L. Bitner

One can never have enough books on conifers, and I'm happy to be able to review this new illustrated conifer encyclopedia for you. I had the pleasure of coincidentally taking the conifer course taught by Dr. Bitner at Longwood Gardens this past winter. In many ways, this book is very similar to the course, absent the wry humor of Dr. Bitner. My review included a comparison of *CONIFERS The Illustrated Encyclopedia* by D. M. van Gelderen and J. R. P. van Hoey Smith.

I found the introduction chapter had a lot of helpful, explanatory, and good-to-know information. There are seven sub-headings, each giving a succinct overview of the subject heading. For experts, this information is well known. For others such as myself, some information

is known, much is unknown, and all is welcome. I found the sub-heading "The Naming of Conifers" informative, as it explained that the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) took responsibility as the international registration authority in 1964. I must do some research or questioning, as Dr. Bitner states that four parts of an International Conifer Registration (ICR) had been published as this book was being prepared. My question is what was published and what remains to be published? I'll have to find out where I can acquire the four-part published register. Perhaps some information on how to register a new conifer cultivar would be helpful.

The encyclopedia portion of this text lists 1,370 species and cultivars with accompanying growth comments. There are not only photos of the conifer in a garden setting, but there are also many up-close photos of the needles/foliage and bark - very helpful identification features. In addition to the genus and species information, there are photos and information of cultivars that are in garden settings. I like that the photos are in garden settings, and also for their clarity.

As a collector, the key to me is availability and garden worthiness. Extremely helpful is the section in the appendix that lists arboretums and gardens under the heading "Where to See Conifers" and the section "Specialty Nurseries." Like the conifers, many are known and many are new to me. But rest assured, armed with this information, I will not pass by an arboretum, garden or specialty nursery that I was not previously aware of.

I like this new encyclopedia and would recommend it to members and friends of the American Conifer Society.

## ACS Regional News

### Southeastern Region

**by Flo Chaffin ACS SE Region President**

In spite of the horrible growing conditions this year, the Southeast Region has continued to work towards becoming an active and engaging organization for the benefit of its members.

Our member representation across the states continues to grow, along with our speaker, garden and nursery lists. We hope to begin putting some of this information up on our Web section this winter. I know all Southeast Region members will be looking for this, and will add to the lists as we proceed. Also, contributions to our regional newsletter continue to grow.

ACS gatherings of members continue in Tennessee and Georgia, and possibly other plans in other states are in the works right now. We hope that our fall meeting in Kentucky encourages another active pocket of ACS members. I know that Scott Burrell and Maud Henne have put their two good heads together and come up with a very comprehensive plan for Virginia that includes get-togethers in three areas of the state. They have already made overtures to the Piedmont Community College in Charlottesville to establish a new dwarf conifer garden for the benefit of the students and public alike. Plans are also underway to establish "reference gardens" (as outlined by the Northeast Region) in Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia.

We are busy planning meetings for 2008, 2009, and our next National Meeting in 2010. Announcements about these events will be made soon. Two conifer symposia are planned in Georgia for Feb-

ruary and May of 2008. The word about conifers is getting out, and I find that people are asking for more and more information. There are many ACS members who give talks to various plant groups on conifers and although I don't know all the names and locations, I do have the strong impression that this subject is getting more and more attention.

### Northeastern Region

**by Larry Nau ACS NE Region President**

The northeastern region had a very successful regional meeting with 161 for dinner on Saturday night. Roughly, we had 150 attendees with almost 50 of those first-timers and 10 from Canada.

Dr. Richard Bitner did a fantastic job with his presentation and we had a number of people disappointed that we did not have more of his books to sell (we sold 54). All of the gardens were outstanding. There were approximately 320 plants in the auction and 800 tickets were sold for the can raffle. Auction results were fantastic

A garden writer was in attendance.

### Central Region

Ethan Johnson will leave the Board of Directors after doing a fantastic job during his term while also serving on the Technical Committee. Ethan will continue to serve as a technical advisor as Chris Daeger joins the Board for a term ending in 2010.

### Northwest Region

The National Meeting 2007 in Seattle was a smashing success which you can read about elsewhere in the *CQ*.

## Unusual Cones



*First photo taken by Kimberly Karlin in Conyers, Georgia  
Others taken by Maud Henne in Toronto, Canada*



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