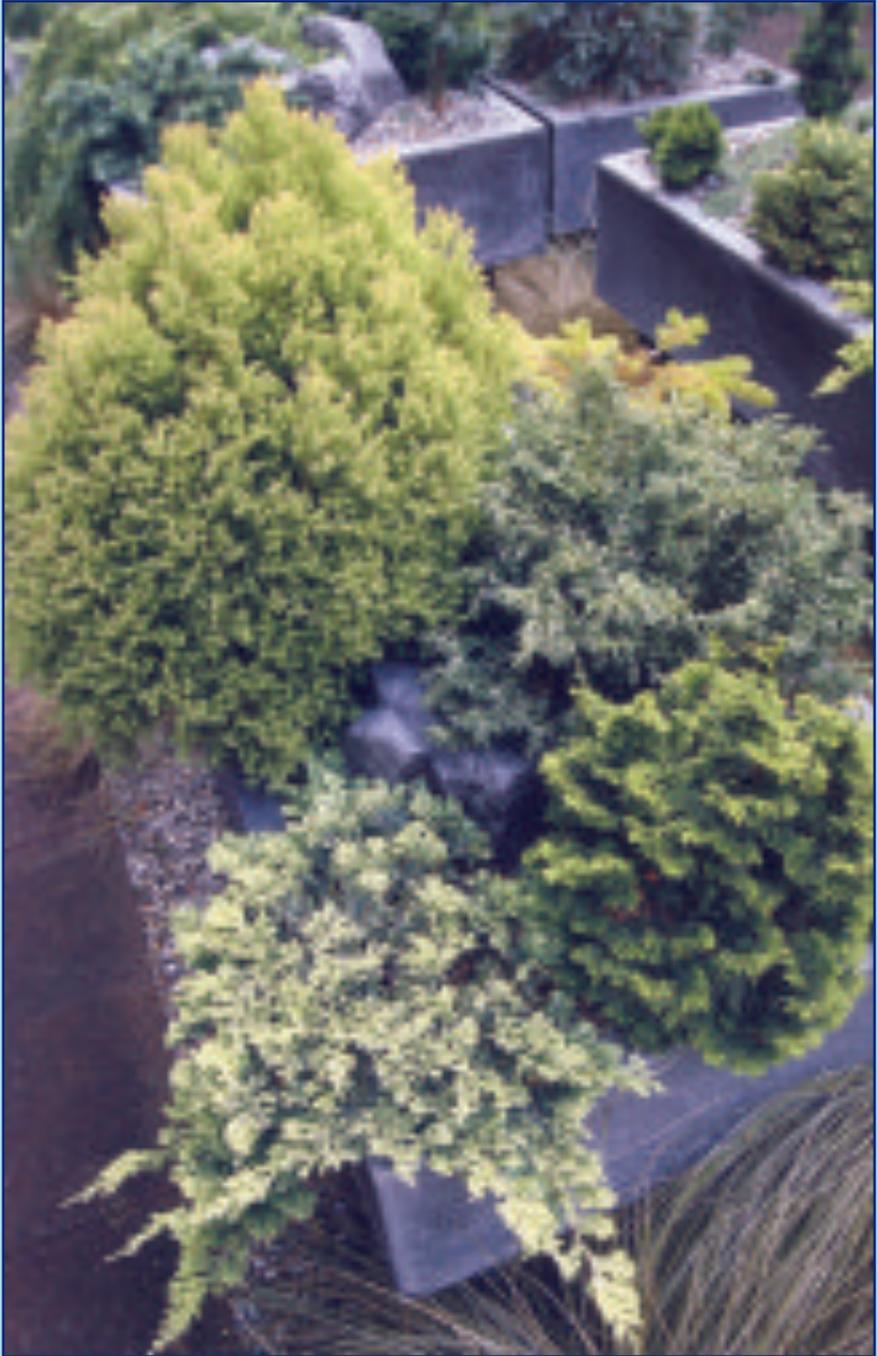


Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 27 No. 2

Spring 2010





Conifers in a Manhattan trough garden
See article by Bruce Appeldoorn
Photo by: Susan Keiser

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Front Cover: *Pinus thunbergii* 'Nana' and garden companions including TK the cat, *Curcuma elatior* 'Emperor' (ginger) and yellow *Coreopsis*.

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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.

All editorial and advertising matters should be sent to: Ron Elardo, 5749 Hunter Ct., Adrian, MI 49221-2474, (517) 902-7230 or email conifereditor@yahoo.com

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Ron Elardo

Technical Editors
Ethan Johnson
Susan Martin
R. William Thomas

Advisory Committee
Ellen Kelley, Committee Chair
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FINAL THOUGHTS

Pining for spring? (Sorry for the bad pun!) Tired of shoveling snow? The wind? The cold?

By the time you read this, spring should be on its way, and the huge piles of snow that for many of us have become a part of the landscape for months will be diminished if not gone.

The 2010 Winter Board Meeting took place in a very chilly Orlando the second weekend in February. This was a good meeting. You will be able to read the entire minutes of the meeting, but I'd like to highlight several things that should be of interest to you, the membership.

Personnel changes:

Ethan Johnson was appointed to fill the remainder of the term of vice-president/treasurer. Ethan will become president at the June National Meeting.

Ron Elardo was appointed as the new *Conifer Quarterly* editor effective with the summer issue. Ron comes with a background in foreign languages (primarily German), in authoring scholarly papers, and with a passion for conifers.

Dennis Lee was appointed as the new Director of the Collectors Conifer of the Year (CCOY) program. Dennis knows his conifers and has the experience to direct a program of this kind. He will assume this position in June.

Susan Martin will replace Don Howse as the chair of the Awards Committee, which chooses recipients of two awards each year, presented at the national Meeting.

Board Policies: the board adopted policies relating to the position of CCOY Director and the tasks and responsibilities associated with that position. The Director was also given charge of an Advisory Committee to assist with the selection of the CCOY plants. So far, the committee consists of Brian Jacob, Western region; Gary Whittenbaugh, Central Region; and Flo Chaffin, Southeast Region. A member from the Northeast Region will be added soon.

Since this is my last President's Letter, I wish to express my deep appreciation to those members who are ending their specific service to the Society. I don't think any of them will disappear, but will participate wearing different hats.

Evelyn Cox, *Conifer Quarterly* Editor: Under Evelyn's leadership the *CQ* became a full-color publication, which has added substantial quality. She also brought in more advertising to support the costs of publishing. Most of all, however, she raised the bar for the quality of articles and pictures appearing in the *CQ*. Thank you, Evelyn, for a job well done!

Ridge Goodwin, outgoing CCOY Director: Ridge was the founder and developer of this very successful program. It has become not only a significant fundraiser for the Society, but also a means of educating our members as to the wide range of garden conifers in existence, and providing an opportunity to acquire these plants and support the Society at the same time. Thank you, Ridge, for the entrepreneurial spirit that has made the CCOY a success!

Don Howse, outgoing Chair, Awards Committee. Don chaired this committee for a number of years, collecting the nominations and leading the committee of past award recipients to make the annual selections. This committee's purpose is an important one in a volunteer organization such as ours: to recognize members who have contributed in major, often unsung ways, to the benefit of the Society.

Thank you, Don, for your many years of loyal service, not only to this committee, but also to the Society!

The experience of being the president of a national plant society has been challenging and rewarding. For the opportunity to meet many of you at regional meetings and to visit many wonderful gardens and arboretums throughout the country, and most importantly, to form new friendships, I thank you.

Ellen Kelley



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EDITOR'S MEMO

This issue is all about conifers and their garden companions. We had such a good response to our request for articles about this theme that we don't have quite enough room to run the last part of Dr. Bert Cregg's article on large conifers. That will carry over to the summer issue.

After the 2009 National meeting, CQ contributor Bruce Appeldoorn, always on the lookout for something unusual in the plant world, discovered a beautiful trough garden on a terrace garden in Manhattan. You'll find an article about it inside this issue.

To learn more about putting together lovely mixed borders, read Joann Currier's article about display gardens she has designed for her nursery in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. From Marguette, Michigan, Bill Van Kosky sent in an article about his experiences using heather as a companion plant to conifers and David Resavage, ACS member from Kingston, Pennsylvania, recommends some other outstanding companions for your conifers.

If you want to improve your photography and even add a dramatic touch, I think you'll enjoy reading a short article of photography tips by David Rasch, ACS member from Santa Fe, New Mexico. I hope you enjoy the issue and find something exciting inside to add to your garden.

Now it's time for me to say goodbye as editor. I can't leave without letting you know how much I appreciate your faithfulness to the *Conifer Quarterly* and your articles, photos, and feedback. I have enjoyed meeting so many of you over the past four years, an opportunity I might not



have had, had I not been privileged to serve as your editor.

I would like to thank my husband, Tom, who threw my name into the editorial hat and Past President Don Wild who supported me for the position.

During my tenure, I've developed much respect for the members of the Technical Committee: Susan Martin, Bill Thomas, and Ethan Johnson. Experts in their fields, they also possess the people skills necessary to work with authors without diminishing the quality or intent of the author's original work. They have each worn many different hats over the years to make the Society what it is today and their help over the last few years has been invaluable to me.

Ellen Kelly and Marvin Snyder have offered their keen advice and support to me and John Martin always stands ready to make the publication process flow smoothly.

Mostly unseen by members, is the dedication of the ACS Board of Directors. As a non-voting member of the board, I have been able to see them in action and

their actions are centered on you the member and you the reader of the *Conifer Quarterly*. One of the significant effects of that allegiance is their unanimous agreement to begin producing the *Conifer Quarterly* in full color.

From outside the Society, I want to thank Monya Barnes who took over the graphics and printing side of the magazine when I became editor and has done a beautiful job of laying it out and efficiently moving it from my hands to yours.

As to the future of the *CQ*, it is in good hands, those of Ron Elardo. In addition to his outstanding background, he is so enthusiastic and has some great ideas that are sure to please you. I look forward to just sitting back and reading the summer issue.

In signing off, I will confess: the spring issues have been the hardest ones for me to produce. Each year as the spring publication deadline approaches, the birds are hopping about outside my window, singing deliriously, and the early-blooming trees are popping buds like crazy. Next year, I hope to be out there among the birds, the flowering trees, and the conifers. When the conifers flush, I will think of you, the faithful readers of the *Conifer Quarterly*.

Publication Dates

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

Submit articles/photos to:

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Ron Elardo named new Editor of Conifer Quarterly



It is always comforting to know something about the new kid on the block. In my case, becoming editor of *Conifer Quarterly* impacts such a large number of individuals who cherish both the history of the Quarterly and the Society that it represents. In addition, any time there is a new stewardship over a journal or an organization, getting to know that person helps to allay or at least ameliorate concerns. In this, my initial address to you, I will endeavor to paint a picture of myself, my personal style of editing and my credentials. I will also suggest focuses for upcoming editions of the *CQ*.

My academic training and professional experience have centered on writing, editing and language acquisition. I hold a doctorate from The University of Michigan, a masters from Purdue University and a bachelors from the University at Buffalo. My plant training comes from

Michigan State University's Master Gardener and Advanced Master Gardener certifications, sponsored by Hidden Lake Gardens' education programs. I am the author of many juried articles and papers and I have myself juried papers for international conferences. As a college professor of 27 years, I have taught writing in English, English as a Second/Foreign Language and German. I consider myself most adept at editing, writing and assisting authors.

In preparation for assuming the duties of Editor of *CQ* I have reviewed and read each of the past editions of the Quarterly and the former Bulletin. It has been an enlightening and educative process for me. I am really new to the addiction to conifers and plan not to seek treatment, but, instead, will let it play out to its wonderfully illogical end. Additionally, I have also been studying the standard reference books on conifers along with the many books on woody landscape plants which contain a wealth of information on our beloved conifers.

I learned long ago as a professor that a good dose of humor can go quite a long way in making the teaching-learning experience rich and rewarding. I envision interjecting some humor in the themes I will suggest for upcoming *CQ* editions. This is not meant to diminish the scholarly and professional status and standards of the Quarterly, but rather so that our contributors and readers might enjoy some comic relief while being informed and entertained. It is also my mission to

listen to you, our readership. What themes might we concentrate on, or what kinds of topics might we revisit or strike out on? I will make contact with other societies to internationalize our selection of articles.

I will approach the writings of contributors with compassion, constructive criticism, and with a keen attention to detail, and scholarly and secondary research. I will work to promote the best articles possible and I will listen to you and I will seek you out for assistance and advice, as well. After all, we are all inter-

connected in some way. Were we not we would not be sharing the beauty of conifers and all plants with each other and with the world.

For the Summer issue, I am proposing our topic be: Conifers Mimicking Water: Falls, Geysers, Rapids, Fountains and Cascades.

Thank you for entrusting me with the editorship of your journal.

Ronald J. "Ron" Elardo, Ph.D

Next Issue: Summer 2010

Our next issue will feature Conifers Mimicking Water: Rapids, Geysers, Falls and Fountains.

Conifers are an amazement over which we and nature share stewardship. They are such unique plants that surprise all who stop by to sojourn. The themes proposed are meant to inspire and to inquire. Whether you are a connoisseur, an explorer or a novice, you have a story to tell – a favorite conifer, pictures, plant care, problem solutions, a new hybrid or cultivar. We want to hear from you. We welcome any interpretation or addition to the main themes we offer.

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

Fall Backdrops to Conifers

Regional Winter Gardens

Cones and "Flowers" in Spring

We at *Conifer Quarterly* welcome news alerts about conifers or about our members.

Contact Dr. Ronald J. Elardo (conifereditor@yahoo.com) to discuss your ideas.

Mixing Conifers with Other Garden Plants

by David Resavage

Conifers naturally make great neighbors to ornamental companion plants in the garden. Many novice gardeners and homeowners embarking on a new garden design or landscape renovation are unaware of the magic conifers will bring to their schemes when combined with their favorite ornamental flowering shrubs, trees, perennials, grasses, and even tropical plants, such as bananas! The horticultural marriage between conifers and companion plants can ensure years of gardening bliss when thoughtfully arranged.

Combining Conifers and Companion Plants

The vast array of conifers and companion plants offered in the market today make it possible for harmonious, interesting, and dramatic garden designs. Particular attention must be paid to size, scale, and growth rate of companion plants. If ignored, unwanted consequences and disappointment may ensue. It would be foolish to invest time and money into a rare and unusual conifer and to plant it directly next to your favorite shrub or tree companion, only to see it become quickly outgrown by its companion, causing irregular growth for both plants!

Scale and maturation of companion plants is essential to achieving a visually pleasing garden of mixed arrangement. Beginning gardeners in the planning stage should allow ample room for growth between their conifer specimens and companion plants. Some plants, especially woody ornamentals and perennials, are notorious for growing larger than the

printed information tag accompanying them. Luckily, most can be moved with minimal effort in an immature garden. Gardeners with overgrown, or mature gardens, sometimes are faced with plants of questionable ornamental value, and they are best advised to make one final pruning at the trunk base and begin again. I have found myself in this difficult situation; faced with the task of removing the old in order to make room for the new and exciting, then finally arriving at a happy conclusion that most times the removal was for the best, as a garden landscape is ever changing. Many new plants offered today, both conifers and companion plants, are far superior to the cultivars of yesteryear and new additions to the garden can be a welcome breath of fresh air, especially in a mature garden.

Conifers and Woody Ornamentals Combinations

Since conifers afford texture and year-round color, woody ornamentals, like trees and shrubs are natural companion plants with their seasonal changes in appearance. Always bear in mind their ultimate size and mature visual appearance next to their conifer neighbors. It only takes one visit to a well-stocked nursery to realize that your only limit when choosing companion plants is your imagination. (I don't like to say budget is a limit when choosing garden plants because plants, unlike most other purchases, will GROW! You can always buy smaller plants, just be patient and offer some extra TLC with young plants.) While at your

favorite nursery, look for what is currently in bloom, but also be attentive to how the plant will look later in the season, after the flowering period is complete. Many woody ornamentals add great winter interest to the garden with colorful stems, heavily textured bark and unique branching structure. Additionally, old garden favorites are now offered in variegated and all golden foliage forms, such as the hardy blue holly (*Ilex xmeserveae* 'Honey Maid')!



Ilex xmeserveae 'Honey Maid'
Photo Credit: Eaton Farms/
Pennsylvania Pride Trees

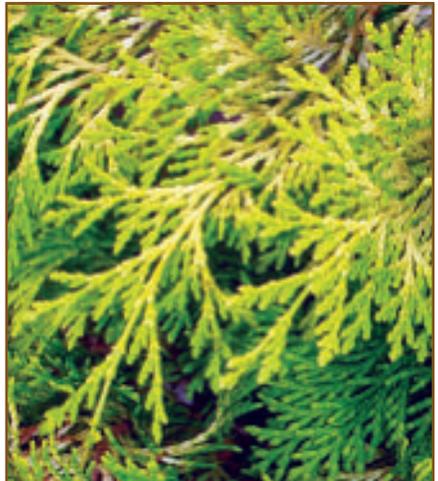
This spectacular new variegated evergreen holly, offering a dark green leaf outlined with a rich golden margin, is very hardy. It makes an outstanding complement to bluish colored conifers, especially during the winter months.

The lush, blue, purple and lavender colored flowers of *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Endless Summer' or *Hydrangea*

macrophylla 'David Ramsey' when combined with a golden conifer, such as *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Crippsii' or *Taxus cuspidata* 'Dwarf Bright Gold' can transform the sunny summer garden into a visual explosion of color!



Hydrangea macrophylla 'David Ramsey'
Photo Credit: Eaton Farms/
Pennsylvania Pride Trees



Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Crippsii'
Photo Credit:
Eaton Farms/Pennsylvania Pride Trees

Best of all these two new big leaf hydrangea cultivars are repeat bloomers, June through October, and will reliably produce flowers every year, even after a harsh northeastern winter. They produce flowers on both old growth and new woody stems, thus ensuring outstanding flower display. Equally, the shady summer garden can be brightened up with the unusual pairing of the shrubby form, leathery-leafed *Aucuba japonica* 'Variegata', combined with such mounding/prostrate conifers, as *Taxus baccata* 'Repandens' or *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* 'Duke Gardens'. Those gardeners with restricted space who desire a small spring flowering tree, would benefit from the association of the pink flowering *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' with *Picea pungens* 'Procumbens'. The new, blue-green flush of growth on the picea, combined with the rich crimson leaf color of the cercis, make for an unforgettable spring show, guaranteed to only improve



Cercis canadensis 'Forest Pansy'
Photo Credit:
Eaton Farms/Pennsylvania Pride Trees

with each passing season!

With so many trees and shrubs available, the association between conifers and woody companion plants is endless. Woody ornamentals will provide seasonal colors and textures, but rely upon the conifers to continue the show year round. Be creative, look for interesting attributes that will give woody companion plants year round appeal with your conifer gems!



Cercis canadensis 'Flow'
Photo Credit:
Eaton Farms/Pennsylvania Pride Trees

Perennials, Grasses, and Tropical Plants with Conifers

A garden consisting of only woody ornamentals and conifers would be pretty but sometimes not visually interesting. When associating perennials, grasses and YES, even tropical plants with conifers and woody ornamentals, a garden is yet again transformed, taking on an added dimension of depth, scale, and drama. With limited space in this article, I can only offer some interesting suggestions utilizing these associations in the garden. But

again, the same rules apply. Always be mindful of mature plant size and scale. Perennials and grasses are best used in mass plantings if space permits. They should be at the very least displayed in groupings; odd-number groups seem to work best. A garden design consisting of too many different single selections looks busy and visual clutter in the garden should be avoided.

A great contrast plant in the garden, especially when used in groups or mass plantings, is *Heuchera*, commonly known as coralbells. This plant has seen an explosion of cultivars in endless colors recently. *Heucheras* work well planted in

mass groupings and used as a border edging in the semi-shaded garden. *Heuchera* 'Caramel' offers a rich, bronze-orange color, guaranteed to get noticed in the garden. Plants from the genus *Hemerocallis*, commonly known as daylilies, might be considered an old standby but are now being offered in endless color combinations. Many new varieties exist with extended bloom periods and repeat bloom cycles; these new cultivars are not your grandmother's daylilies! Some new cultivars can be a bit pricey but are well-worth the investment for their unusual colors and high performance. Additionally, most are tough,



Cupressus nootkatensis 'Pendula' with *Hakonechloa* 'Aureola'
Photo by David Resavage from a landscape renovation he designed.

enduring garden perennials, which do well in full-sun or semi-shade.

A favorite grass-like perennial of mine that works well in both sun and shade is *Liriope muscari* 'Variegata'. This plant has endless uses, from being planted en masse as a groundcover to utilization as a wispy edging/border plant. It combines well with conifers and perennials alike, growing only about 12 inches to 15 inches in height. The colorful variegated leaves endure well into early winter, making it a hardworking plant, worthy of garden space. A true dwarf grass with vibrant golden color, making a splash in the shady and semi-shaded garden is *Hakonechloa* 'Aureola'. This garden grass combines perfectly with hostas and ferns in the shady/semi-shaded garden and is tolerant of dry soils. A graceful grass with arching bright yellow blades, it looks great when paired with a conifer such as *Cupressus nootkatensis* 'Pendula'.

A few years back I started toying with the idea of adding tropical plants to my northeastern Pennsylvania garden, and after some research, I discovered that my idea was well within the grasp of my garden design, even though I commonly experience winter lows typically around zero degrees Fahrenheit. A true hardy tropical perennial is the *Musa basjoo*, commonly referred to in the garden world as Japanese fiber banana. This exotic banana will grow easily to 10-feet tall or more in a single season. Large dramatic light green leaves up to 6-feet long are sure to make a few heads turn. The large leaves combine well with other intermediate and large conifers, such as *Cedrus atlantica* 'Fastigiata', as I have done in my own garden.



Musa basjoo (Japanese fiber banana) with *Cedrus atlantica* 'Fastigiata' and *Liriope muscari* 'Variegata' as an edging plant at the Resavage garden in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania (zone 6a).

Minimal winter protection in the fall ensures this large growing tropical will return year after year. Simply cut the banana stalks down to about 6 inches tall after the first frost. Cover the stalk completely with deep hardwood mulch or use leaves. I construct a simple cage around the stalks and surrounding root zone before filling with leaves at least 15 inches to 18 inches in depth. In early May, I remove the mulch/leaves and witness the banana returning from the dead! Try this and by late June your banana will be taller than you and well on its way to giant proportions creating major garden drama!

Be creative in your garden design and plant associations as the plant selections offered today are endless. Be on the lookout for new and up-and-coming

plants, which are always being marketed. Try new selections and don't be afraid to make changes to your garden. A garden design is never truly complete because in order for a garden to stay fresh and alive, changes inevitably have to be made.

About the author: David Resavage is a professional landscape designer possessing an abounding love of conifers, tropicals, and any plant deemed rare or unusual. After pursuing an academic career in landscape design and ornamental horticulture, he began actively pursuing, studying and utilizing the most unusual, rare and dramatic landscape plants in his

designs. He has traveled extensively throughout the British Isles, Canada and the Caribbean researching and observing native and ornamental plants in relation to garden design. He divides his time between his home-based ornamental specimen garden in Wilkes-Barre, and a more natural woodland garden at his summer home on Sylvan Lake, about an hour outside Wilkes-Barre. His gardens have been repeatedly featured in local periodicals for their unusual and noteworthy design style and provocative use of plant materials. He is the chief landscape designer for Hanover Nursery in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

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Book Review

by James Early

Lives of Conifers by Graham Powell

Most conifers may be monoecious, but most conifer lovers have a preference: natural or landscape. That generalization misses an important nuance—many folks on the landscape side actually want to learn more about coniferous inner workings but just don't know where to start. If this is you, then I have your book.

Conversely, if you are solely into conifers for their landscape applications, *Lives of Conifers* isn't for you. Skip it. However, if you are curious—especially about how conifers grow—then this technical book is well worth the \$50.

In a blurb, this book, by retired University of New Brunswick professor Graham Powell, covers the lives of north-eastern conifers, from seed to duff. The trees are those Powell has spent a career researching: pitch, eastern white, jack, and red pines; white, red, and black spruces; Balsam fir; Canadian hemlock; Virginia juniper; and Eastern arborvitae. While this is a college-level book (you're likely to find at least a section or two to be more than you need on any particular topic), this book will definitely bring you up to speed in a hurry on all the botany you missed. It is a strong, interesting read for the enthusiast.

But in a weird way, this book is more special for what it isn't than for what it is. In a publishing era jointly dominated by financial, industry, and ideological pressures, Powell, cut from an age when research on trees was done for the sake of research on trees, dares to put out a book

on something interesting just for the heck of it. His *Lives of Conifers* is the magnum opus of a man who has spent a career being a lone voice on how trees grow.

Some of Powell's material may border on the trivial to the common gardener, such as average numbers of seeds and seed scales per cone. But the gardener-cum-naturalist may appreciate learning what influences light and heavy cone years, average age of first cone development by species, and seeing diagrams for deducing the age of conifers by isolating yearly branch growth. Powell is a master of the latter, and his section here is absolutely superb. Mapping his branch growth diagrams to both tree photos and real trees gives the reader a newfound sense of empowerment, or at least a neat backyard party trick, on matters of spruce, fir, and pine age.

For a lone voice, Powell is a well-spoken one. Even complex biological processes are broken out in understandable prose, but not overly so. If you're like me, you'll need his glossary (which ideally might have been a little bigger) or context clues now and then. I like that Powell doesn't baby his readers, nor does he attempt to sound academic. He respects his audience and writes as if he's speaking to an intelligent, non-Ph.D. colleague.

We conifer lovers are visual types, and here, *Lives of Conifers* shines. Photos, tables, and drawings galore bring life to two- and three-dimensional constructs to the point that a reader could absorb the book's lessons through the visuals and

their captions alone. And Powell's close-ups are of sufficient caliber to forgive his occasional green-tree-on-green-background landscape shots. A warning to anyone who's failed to find Waldo in a picture before—the level of detail Powell describes in some photo captions will leave mortals feeling like they live their life in a fog. Where you and I see a still photo of a tree, Powell, the consummate mad scientist of tree growth, sees a rich movie of tree development, from past to present to future.

Putting out a book on something interesting just for the heck of it is neat in a rebellious sort of way, but it makes for limited marketability. If you live in or near northeastern North America, you'll feel a connection to the trees in this book.

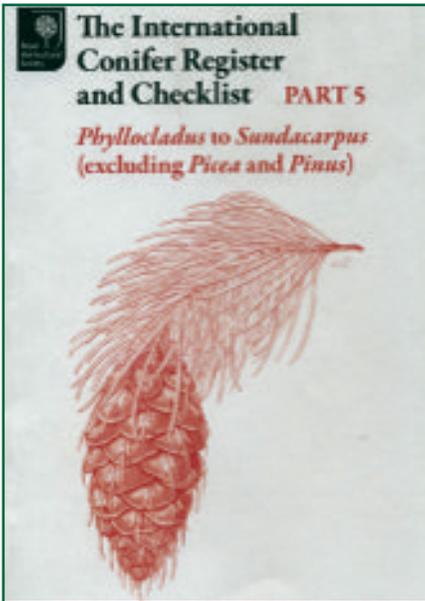
If not, you probably won't. And therein dwells the book's self-inflicted injustice. My uneducated guess is that many of the book's lessons on tree growth, drawn heavily from Powell's own research, are applicable across genera worldwide. Still, save for those who read reviews like this one, most worldwide forestry or landscape readers won't look past a subtitle that reads "A comparative account of the coniferous trees indigenous to northeastern North America."

The marketer in me would chastise Powell for such a subtitle, but I don't think he much cares. And that's the point, the whole point, really. This book isn't made for the foresters. It's not made for the landscape crowd. It's made for the trees and whoever is interested in them.



New part of Conifer Register published

by Lawrie Springate



A further part of *The International Conifer Register and Checklist* has been published [1]. It follows the format of previous parts closely: a list of epithets with originator, introducer, namer, registrant, synonyms and description where known, and further notes of interest on origin and to assist in the application of the epithet. All established epithets traced have been included, as well as those only known to the authors from online lists and catalogues (hence not established under the cultivated plant code) if they seem reliably described from multiple sources. Epithets with single electronic sources are omitted to avoid establishing incorrect spellings and spurious renamings. All accepted botanic taxa are included without description, as well as their synonyms. In total some 1200 epithets are accounted

for.

The bulk of the cultivars listed derive from five species, in descending number of cultivars *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Platycladus orientalis*, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, *Sciadopitys verticillata* and *Sequoia sempervirens*, the last four in monotypic genera. *Pseudotsuga menziesii* owes its pre-eminence to numerous brooms collected mainly from habitat in recent years. I found no cultivars I could reliably attribute to the other three species of the genus. *Platycladus* has had a long history of selection, initially more for growth forms, recently more often for three changes of colour as the year progresses. *Sequoiadendron* numbers edge ahead of the rest because of the enthusiasm of Tim Bekaert, who has set up a website documenting every specimen he can discover in Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg. Thirty years ago *Sciadopitys* cultivars could be counted on the fingers of one hand, since when extreme variability from modern seed has produced a remarkable crop of variants, many still to be proven garden-worthy. I should mention that two hard-to-find German-language illustrated works by the breeder Kurt Wittbold-Müller [3,4] proved invaluable in writing up the genus. Fewer slower-growing and 19th century cultivars leaves *Sequoia* lagging behind *Sequoiadendron*. It does have more recent selections for vigorous growth and bluer foliage, but very few for greater hardiness.

Podocarpus stands in stark contrast to these small genera: even as reduced by

the removal of a number of widely accepted segregate genera, it still comprises some 106 species spread across both hemispheres of the Old and New Worlds. Cultivars are almost entirely confined to five species from SE Australia and New Zealand with hardiness ratings between USDA Zones 6 and 8. *Phyllocladus*, *Prumnopitys* and *Pseudolarix* with few cultivars, and *Pilgerodendron*, *Pseudotaxus*, *Retrophyllum*, *Saxegothaea* and *Sundacarpus* with none complete the account.

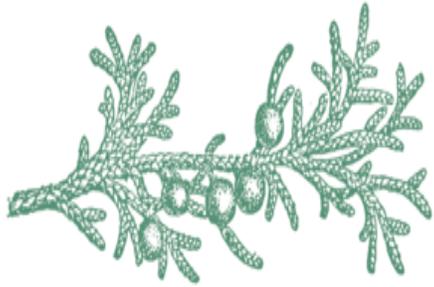
This 128-page A5 paperback, ISBN 97819070570211, is available in North America from "RHS Books & Gifts Online" (<http://shop.wisley.co.uk>) by credit card payment of £17.50 which includes postage.

Picea and *Pinus* are excluded from Part 5 and were scheduled to be Parts 6 and 7 respectively, but the RHS has now suspended this work and terminated the Conifer Registrar's post, with any new registrations processed in a pool of non-specialised RHS registration workers. However, all is not lost: I am continuing to record new conifers and offer nomenclatural advice as before, though now with my colleagues on the British Conifer Society Panel of Experts. We can be contacted at l.springate@rbge.org.uk.

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Conifers and Heather: Good Companions

by Bill Van Kosky

Several years ago I was planning to dig up about a hundred square feet of lawn and plant something different than what is typically seen in ornamental gardens or borders. While searching for ideas, an illustrated magazine article about heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) piqued my interest. Before reading the article, all I knew about heather was that it was a bush of some kind that grew on the moors of Scotland. No one in our circle of gardening friends had grown heather, nor had we ever seen any for sale in the small-town garden centers in our area. This would, indeed, be something different for us here on the south shore of Lake Superior. Reference books confirmed that our USDA Zone 5 climate was well within heather's cultural comfort level.

Our soil is naturally acidic, but still needed to be amended with measured amounts of sand, peat and compost before 36 heather plants from a mail order nursery could be tucked in. They did so well that I decided to order some more to plant the next year, in another section of the yard that was slated for conversion from lawn to garden.

One bed consisting solely of heather was enough. This time, I wanted to integrate additional heather cultivars into a mixed planting. The question, then, was, "What are good companion plants for heather?"

Since I would be creating a garden environment suited to the needs of heather, whatever else I planted needed to have the same soil and sun preferences. These are:

- Acidic soil, in the 5.5 to 6.5 pH range
- Moisture retentive soil with good drainage
- Full sun (six or more hours per day)

These criteria eliminated some prospective companions, but coincided with the preferences of many others. However, establishing that plants prefer, or can tolerate, the conditions in a given site, doesn't necessarily make them good companions.

"Good companions" in an ornamental garden create a combined presence that is pleasing to the eye, whether by complementing or contrasting with one another, or in some other way.

When I ordered my first heather plants in 2001, the catalog noted, "Dwarf conifers go well with heather." After buying a couple of books and leafing through umpteen catalogs (my automatic response whenever I'm pondering a gardening decision), I could visualize the possibilities.

Only the most mundane conifers were available locally, but by then I had become aware of several excellent mail-order sources. I started buying dwarf and miniature conifers, and intermingling them with heather and other ornamentals. Whatever else my several beds contain, each has some combination of conifers and heather. At present, I have about 50 conifers and twice that many heathers, with more of both on the "buy" list for next year.

Readers of this article are probably aware of the great variations in size, shape and color among conifers, but may



Juniperus pfitzeriana 'Daub's Frosted' with two heathers showing their summer colors.



Conifers, heather and heath mingle in this grouping.

not be as well informed about these characteristics as they apply to heather. Below are some comparisons:

Size:

Heathers are evergreen shrubs ranging in height 2 inches to 2 feet. The prostrate varieties creep slowly outward to form dense mats in the manner of other ground-cover plants. Most cultivars, however, range in height from approximately 8 to 18 inches. Spreads after several years vary from about 12 to 30 inches. On the basis of size alone, heather is comparable to miniature conifers and dwarfs in their early years of growth.

Shape:

When it comes to diversity of shape, heather can't match conifers. Except for the relatively few prostrate types, heathers tend to grow as dense mounds. None are truly globose (ball-shaped), nor do any of them exhibit the columnar or pyramidal configurations common among conifers.



Juniperus chinensis 'Kaizuka Variegata' and *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Squarrosa Intermedia' between heather 'Cupea' (upper left) and heath 'Ann Sparkes' (right front).



Juniperus pfitzeriana 'Daub's Frosted' behind two heathers taken in early November when the heathers are well along in their transition to brilliant winter colors



Chamaecyparis thyoides 'Meth Dwarf' backed by two colorful heathers

Color:

Conifer colors range from yellow and gold, through various shades of green, to greenish blue and blue. Except for the latter two, heather's palette of colors includes all of these, plus grey and red.

New growth on some heather, like that on some conifers, is bright and quite different in color than the mature foliage. As spring turns to summer, the lighter new growth darkens until it matches the rest of the plant. A few heather cultivars undergo an additional dramatic color change. Early in the spring they are a brilliant red. Gradually, over the course of a year, they change to orange, then yellow, then orange again and finally back to red.

The above comparisons all pertain to foliage color. Flower color is yet another factor to be considered. In the battle of the blossoms, conifers run a distant second to heather's masses of flowers. Not having to

rely on insects to transfer pollen, conifers have no biological need for large, colorful blossoms to attract pollinators. Some conifers, however, do manage to put on a good color show with attractive cones. A notable example of this is the ACS 2008 Collectors Conifer of the Year dwarf selection, *Picea abies* 'Pusch,' with its green foliage and bright red cones.

I personally value heather mainly for its foliage but many gardeners who raise it are more interested in the spectacular annual floral display. Bloom times vary among cultivars, but most burst into flower in August or September. A heather catalog lists the following flower colors: white, pink, dark pink, crimson, blood red, lavender, mauve, amethyst and deep purple.

From the above brief discussion of size, shape and color of conifers and heathers, and keeping in mind that good

companions may either complement or contrast with one another, some design possibilities come to mind:

- Use prostrate heathers as a ground-cover between dwarf or miniature conifers
- Use prostrate conifers as a ground-cover between taller heathers
- Plant heathers en masse to serve as a foreground or background for larger conifers
- Plant mound-shaped heathers among columnar or pyramidal conifers of similar size
- Intermingle heathers with conifers of comparable size that are distinctly different in form than spiky mounds of heather (pinus or thuja, for example)

- Plant light-colored heathers among dark conifers of similar size, and vice versa
- In a mixed garden or border containing conifers, include some heathers to provide color in the late fall when heathers are in bloom but many perennial flowers are past their prime for the year

Adrian Bloom's *Gardening With Conifers* (Firefly Books Ltd., 2002) has some magnificent photographs showing extensive plantings of conifers surrounded by large drifts of heather. Masses of heather coupled with large conifers are inspiring, but those of us who measure our garden space in square feet rather than acres, need not despair. Equally impressive visual impact can be achieved in small-scale plantings of heather and conifers.

Over the past several years I have proved to my own satisfaction that small groups of plants consisting of a few miniature or dwarf conifers and a few heathers, thoughtfully combined, can create a garden community of good companions.

Heather and Heath:

Calluna vulgaris grows wild in the British Isles and parts of northern mainland Europe. These heathers are hardy to USDA zone 5, and colder with winter protection against drying winds. Their scale-like leaves lie tight to the twigs. Other than normal watering, the only care they need is an annual spring shearing to keep them from getting scraggly.

Heath (*Erica*) is an evergreen shrub closely related to heather. It, too, prefers acidic soil and full sun exposure and is



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very similar to its relative in terms of size, shape, foliage color and flower color. A significant difference between the two ericaceous shrubs is that most heaths bloom during the winter or very early spring, rather than in the fall.

I have about a dozen heath cultivars that I use for complementing or contrasting with conifers and other plants, in the same ways that I use heather.

Resources:

If the possibility of planting heather or heath among your conifers appeals to you, it would be a good idea to “read the book before you plant the plant.” In 2008, Timber Press published, *Gardening with Hardy Heathers*, which provides comprehensive coverage of the topic. The chap-

ter on care and cultivation will help you determine if conditions in your area are suitable for growing heather and heath.

Another useful resource is the North American Heather Society (www.northamericanheathersoc.org). Nurseries specializing in heather and heath can also be found on the internet. They typically offer a hundred or more varieties, differing in height, spread, foliage color, flower color and bloom time.

About the author: Bill and Judy Van Kosky live and garden in rural Marquette County, Michigan. They have been ACS members since 2007. They welcome member visits to their gardens, by appointment.

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Tips for Photographing Conifers

by David Rasch

Photographing conifers can be challenging. But when you capture a stunning shot, the results are rewarding. Here are a few tips that can assist you in achieving the best results using a digital camera and image-editing software.

Camera Basics

I use a Nikkor 18-200mm zoom lens on a Nikon D60 camera body with Corel Paint Shop Pro Ultimate Photo X2 software. These days, most digital cameras are capable of producing good quality shots. High resolution and experimentation are keys to producing unique photos. Be sure to have a fully charged spare battery and enough free space in your memory cards before going out on a vacation or photo session. Also, set your camera to an appropriate resolution such as fine or super fine so that the images are of sufficient quality to enlarge them or to retain better quality after cropping and enlarging smaller portions of an image.

If you wish to submit photos for publication in the *Conifer Quarterly*, remember that images must be at least 300 dots-per-inch in size, so you should start with a fine or super-fine resolution on your camera. The original images should be mailed or e-mailed in this size to the editor. For non-print applications, such as Web site posting or general e-mail transmission, smaller images that are less than 5MB are preferred. In these cases, your larger images can be saved in PDF format, which compacts them into much smaller files.

Achieving Special Effects

First, determine the scope of your subject. Do you intend to emphasize a detail of a tree, an entire tree, a tree in the landscape, or a landscape with trees? A zoom lens helps to examine the subject from these perspectives with ease. The viewer's imagination will fill in what is just beyond the picture frame. For example, the effect of cutting off branch tips can exaggerate a windswept characteristic.

The image format, vertical or horizontal, has a lot of impact on your subject. Horizontal formats tend to have a relaxed sense, conveying calmness; while vertical formats tend to have a vigorous sense, conveying motion. Determine if your subject has a vertical or horizontal orientation and how that works with your chosen image format. You can alter and change the image format later using a crop function in image-editing software and still retain a good shot if you started with a high-resolution setting on your camera.

Next, study your subject from various angles and locations around the tree, including kneeling on the ground instead of standing. Take notice of interesting forms, colors, and shadows as you move. Background images can be distracting or enhancing to the subject. Watch how objects in the distance change locations on the picture plane.

Lighting is critical to the subject. Time of day is a factor; to take advantage of it requires more patience. You may want to visit the subject at various times throughout the day to note the subject's

lighting conditions. If your subject looks best from its west side, then morning hours will have the dark subject backlit, while afternoon hours will directly illuminate the subject. Sunrise, early morning, late afternoon, and sunset provide more dramatic lighting with long shadows and warmer colors. Bright sunlight around noon makes the smallest shadows. Overcast skies often bring out colors that may appear bleached in full sunlight.

Weather and time of season are even longer-range effects that can be used. Photographing conifers when deciduous trees are dormant or in fall color can help isolate or highlight an evergreen on a background of gray, yellow, or orange and red, since they can be lost when placed in front of leafy green trees. A snow-covered ground can be compared to a grass or vegetation-covered ground. Broken clouds in the sky can add an interesting element to the composition, which is lacking with a solid bright blue sky. But, a solid sky can be successful when used to silhouette a subject without background distraction.



Before sunrise, the distant pink alpen-glow hovers above the blue horizon of snow dappled peaks. Foreground snow frames the trees against a gray sky.

Sometimes you will be lucky enough to be shooting while clouds are moving quickly, making a subject temporarily highlighted against a shadowed background.

A complete examination of the subject should include several shots from several viewpoints. In this way, you are composing a two-dimensional image using a few parts of the three-dimensional world. Instant preview is a benefit of digital cameras that allows you to examine the composition while on-site.

Finally, once you've chosen and shot a few frames of the best compositions, fine-tune the images with editing software. Use the crop tool to emphasize the subject. Experiment with color correction, depth of focus, and sharpening tools.



Characteristic details of the pine are highlighted in the late afternoon just before extensive shadows envelop the tree. The low horizon, well-placed under the crown, gives the pine a monumental anthropomorphic stature that appears to be able to break into a flamboyant stride.



The Ancient Tradition of Solstice Sunrise

The first rays of *sunrise* pick out the irregular girth of the left pine's trunk in rich contrast of light and shadow. Sunlit wood is brightly silhouetted against the dark forested background, still in a mountain's shadow. The right pine's crown is strongly delineated on a clear blue sky and horizontal lighting casts shadows dramatically upon its trunk.

Remove distracting parts, like a nearby tree branch extending from out of the image frame in toward the subject, with a paintbrush tool. Software manipulation of digital images can provide limitless variations, so have fun editing your digital photographs of conifers.

About the author: David Rasch has planted more than 100 conifers in his garden in New Mexico. He travels throughout the West seeking large, rare, and individually beautiful conifers; he also collects photographs, prints, and paintings of Western conifers.



The pines are *isolated* crisply on the sky to detail every disheveled twig. Raking *light* on the shaded side of the right pine's trunk picks out three small sunlit snags that mimic snow ravines on the distant mountain.



Snow ravines on the distant slope mimic the scraggly branches of the pine. A strip of dark green conifers in the middle distance is separated from the pine's wind beaten crown of dark green needles, so they don't interfere with the subject. The weathered fallen log in the foreground accents the diagonal slope of the scene.



The invisible winds are exposed. The pine's irregular crown of dead branches seems to snag tufts of fluffy clouds as they float through a deep blue sky. Snow drifts form a well around the trunk revealing how winds whipping around the tree hinder snow from collecting at its base.

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Conifer Companions

by Joann Currier

As we create gardens, most of us want to include many different types of plants as companions to our conifers, yet we may be unsure of how to achieve a harmonious balance in our compositions with more diversity. At our nursery located just outside Chapel Hill, North Carolina (zone 7a), we enjoy creating display beds and mixed borders that demonstrate the use of trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, and conifers. We love to garden and design the beds with new and interesting plants and like to push the limit with certain species.

Because we are in an area with a large deer population, plants resistant to browsing are usually on most customers' minds, along with drought tolerance, given our prolonged periods of dry weather in the summer. High humidity is also a factor in the summer. Our focus at the nursery is to promote successful gardens, so we try to offer plants that will do well in our climate.

Many conifers thrive in our area, especially *Cryptomeria japonica*, *Chamaecyparis obtusa* and *pisifera*, *Pinus thunbergii*, as well as many other species. With our dense red clay soils in the Piedmont and prolonged periods of rain in the winter, we have found that it is beneficial to plant in raised beds and use amendments of pine bark, topsoil/compost, and sometimes gravel to provide better drainage, a requirement for many different conifers with which we experiment. Our average temperature during most of the summer is 88 degrees during the day, falling to the upper 60s to lower 70s at night. Although not shown in any photo-

graphs, *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* and its cultivars do very well in our shaded to semi-shaded garden areas, and we have used them extensively.

To create display beds that are interesting all year and demonstrate the use of many types of plants, we include lots of small evergreen and broad-leaved shrubs with different-size conifers. Small trees are positioned strategically within the beds to provide an overhead canopy. These plants work together to form the basic structure, which is one of the most important elements in our designs, especially during the winter months. Deciduous shrubs are utilized for their color, varying leaf size, and blooms during the warmer months.

Texture difference is an important element of our compositions. Repetition of many of the shrubs, especially the evergreens, gives a sense of flow and continuity to the garden. An ongoing color theme in our display gardens includes soft combinations of blue-gray green, lime green or gold, and white. These colors provide a subtle cool feeling during the hot summer days. As icing on the cake, a number of ornamental grasses, perennials, and annuals are selected for texture variation, as well as splashes of pink, lavender, and burgundy for contrast. These color themes are set off nicely with the rich, dark green needles of many of our conifers plus the evergreen shrubs that "ground" the garden. We have planted a number of flowering bulbs, mostly daffodils, iris, and crocus for excitement from winter through spring. New stars

emerge with each season. We always have some blooms, but the contrast of foliage and form excites us more. Individual specimens blend to create an upper layer with the branching and foliage of small trees, larger shrubs, and conifers. Because the plants have to interact and, of course, keep growing, the border is always changing. It is necessary to keep adding, subtracting, dividing, and pruning to keep certain plants in check and to achieve a balanced look.

apparent: *Cryptomeria japonica* cultivars of ‘Yokohama’ (foreground), ‘Tansu’ and ‘Elegans Nana’ (middle), and the *Cedrus deodara* ‘Prostrate Beauty’ (middle left). The low mounding *Ilex vomitoria* Bordeaux™ is repeated throughout the garden as a structure element along with *Spirea japonica* ‘Lemon Princess’ and *Abelia x* ‘Mardi Gras’, providing finer textures with various colors. *Stachys* ‘Helen von Stein’, a smaller accent perennial, offers a form and color that is repeated as the



Photo 1

Photo 1 shows the structure of our border in the spring as many of the deciduous shrubs and trees are leafing out and the perennials are about to emerge. The *Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis* ‘Oklahoma’ (background) stands out with its purple blooms, as well as the *Acer palmatum* ‘Hubb’s Red Willow’ (foreground) with its gorgeous red strap-like leaves. The conifers that structure the garden are

summer garden unfolds and becomes more flowing and abundant with color, mass, and texture.

Pinus thunbergii ‘Nana’ shown on the front cover of this issue is always one of the favorite conifers of visitors to our garden, providing structure all year. The dark green needles contrast nicely with the dappled coat of our nursery cat “TK” and the bold variegated foliage of *Cur-*



Photo 2

cuma elatior ‘Emperor’ (ginger)! Subtle pale lavender and yellow flowers form at its base in late summer, repeating the colors of the garden. A perennial *Coreopsis* echoes its soft yellow blooms. Varying the color and size of foliage brings excitement to the composition.

In Photo 2, (the second summer picture of the *Pinus thunbergii* ‘Nana’), *Sedum rupestre* ‘Angelina’ provides a fine carpet of texture and color throughout the year. Many prostrate evergreen groundcover plants, work well with small conifers, especially those that cannot tolerate shade or lots of competition. An *Aquilegia* (Columbine) with blue spring flowers creates a bold contrast and a nice texture change. The variegation of the *Curcuma elatior* ‘Emperor’ is repeated with the mid-size *Caryopteris divaricata* ‘Snow Fairy’ which is a great companion

plant in almost any sunny to semi-shaded garden. It has gray-green and cream variegated foliage, plus a bonus of small blue flowers in the summer. Other small- to medium-size perennials providing summer color and varying textures include: *Agastache* ‘Black Adder’ (rich blue flowers all summer), *Rudbeckia subtomentosa* ‘Henry Ellers’ (unusual tubular flowers of soft yellow), *Salvia greggii* (pink flowers), and *Stachys* ‘Helen von Stein’ (bold, fuzzy gray foliage). The grass behind the pine is *Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Adagio’ which reaches 3 feet (4 feet with its beautiful plumes in late summer and fall). It provides a great texture difference with the other plants, as well as movement with a breeze. In the winter, ‘Adagio’ still looks great with its upright structure, tan foliage, and ornamental seed heads. *Penisetum orientale* ‘Karly Rose’ is also

used in the mid-ground with its light rosy pink summer plumes. The vertical quality and flowing nature of grasses, small and large, work well in combination with many conifers. In the background, *Cornus kousa* provides structure and color with its late spring white blooms and scarlet foliage in the fall.

Cedrus deodara ‘Prostrate Beauty’ and *Cryptomeria japonica* ‘Tansu’ are great evergreen plants for year-round structure, color, and texture in the border.

ture, color, and texture differences. *Lagerstroemia* ‘Lafayette’ is another favorite with its light lavender summer flowers. Some of the same perennials as in the previous photos are seen along with *Calamintha nepeta* ‘Honeybee’ (delicate white summer flowers like “Baby’s Breath”), and *Lantana* ‘Trailing Purple’, an annual with lavender flowers all summer.

The right side of photo 3 shows the annual grass *Pennisetum setaceum*



Photo 3

In Photo 3, the large bold leaves of *Musa lasiocarpa* provide great foliage contrast and echo the color of the ‘Prostrate Beauty’. The medium-size shrubs of *Spirea japonica* ‘Lemon Princess’ (gold summer foliage and spring pink flowers) and the variegated *Abelia x* ‘Mardi Gras’ blend in well in the mid-ground providing struc-

‘Rubrum’ with its burgundy foliage for contrast in texture and color. In the background is the same *Cornus kousa* and another great tree for structure, *Magnolia grandiflora* Teddy Bear (back right) with its bold dark green leaves. As a side note, I would like to point out that the *Cedrus deodara* and *Cryptomeria* cultivars seem



Photo 4

to hold their own well with dense foliage competition of other vigorous plants in the summer that are close or shading them to a degree. They do not exhibit dieback the way a *Thuja occidentalis* or *Chamaecyparis obtusa* might if they are crowded and partially shaded.

Photo 4 is a longer view of the same border with some of the same plants as previously viewed but with more of the background structure plants, including Japanese maples ‘Seiryu’ (middle of the picture) and ‘Okushimo’ (right side), as well as *Cryptomeria japonica* ‘Gyokruya’ (right side). In this picture, one’s eye is led first to the *Cupressus arizonica* ‘Silver Smoke’, a focal point with its columnar habit and the same blue-gray colors repeated in the border. Gazing further, the

Myrica cerifera ‘Soleil’ (back left) becomes apparent, continuing the gold as part of our color theme.

Photo 5 shows the use of contrasting shapes, colors, and textures of the delicate needled foliage of the prostrate conifer, *Microbiota decussata* (foreground), the weeping *Acer palmatum* ‘Inaba shidare’ with its red dissected leaves, and the bolder foliage of *Edgeworthia chrysantha* (right) with its blooms that provide beautiful late winter interest.

In summary, by following basic principles of design (using structure, form, texture, color, contrast, repetition, etc.) and applying this to our gardens, taking into account different seasons, one can create a garden that gives interest throughout the year.



Photo 5

About the author: Joann Currier is owner of The Unique Plant in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a specialty nursery offering more than 80 cultivars of Japanese maples, shrubs, conifers, ornamental

grasses, and perennials. She is a member of the ACS, The Maple Society, and the Piedmont chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society.

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The World's Largest Trough Garden Comes of Age

by Bruce Appeldoorn

The 2009 ACS National Convention in Long Island, New York, had been a three-day feast of conifers, greedily consumed by all who attended. Served up were huge helpings of gardens, history, informative talks, good friends, good food, and plants, plants, plants. Following the festivities, a few of us took off into New York City to view one of the most fabulously tasteful plant displays I've ever seen. It's hidden, but in plain sight—and here's the dirt.

Right in the middle of Manhattan, in one of the most urban of all imaginable gardening environments, lies what has to be the world's largest collection of trough gardens. More than 250 custom-built square and rectangular fiberglass containers surround the second-floor offices of the prestigious Rockefeller Center building. Located on a large but private exterior terrace, the gardens present a living collage of dwarf conifers and small-scale companion plants. Buffered from winds by a low-perimeter hedge, the containers are viewable from the offices inside and are available for walk-around touring and entertainment. And entertaining they are—a joy to behold, each one a garden jewel.

Our host was the creator, designer, and installer of the project, ACS member Susan Keiser. These gardens were recently visited by the traveling group from the Dutch Conifer Society and are starting to acquire a bit of fame. Gaining admittance through several layers of tight building security took a few extra minutes



but served to focus one's attention toward something special yet to come.

The project began in 1997 with the installation of the first group of 50 containers. Each container is custom designed and fabricated according to Susan's specifications, ensuring optimal display height, drainage, and dimensions. All of the troughs are seated upon gravel bed areas that are interspersed between the raised tile floor areas on the patio. Water percolates out of the containers, into the gravel, and then follows the roof drain system to ground level. The troughs are arranged (in groups of three to seven) around all sides of the building, so there is considerable variety in exposure to sun-

light and wind patterns; this also allows so many varieties of plants to be utilized to their best advantage.

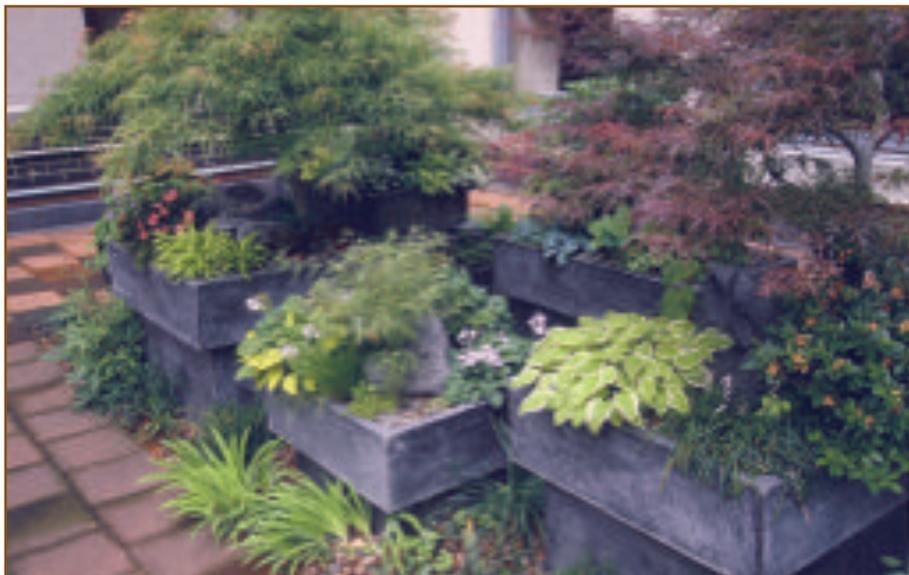
The container media used is a modified type of scree, with lots of small granitic gravel mixed in to ensure proper drainage and to accommodate the many alpine plants that grace the planters. Plants are often seated in pockets in volcanic rock “boulders” that may protrude through the surface of the planters. Susan has employed tremendous cleverness in staging the displays, but the subtle interplay among the plants in terms of foliage texture, color, and form sets these gardens apart as truly unique.

As you can see from the photos, the charm of these gardens comes in part from the use of such a wide variety of plants. A 2- x 3-foot planter might contain 16 different plants, and these can be conifers, broadleaf evergreens, dwarf woody plants, perennials, grasses, herbs, alpine plants, Japanese maples, minor bulbs—even a few annuals and tropicals during

the summer months. A few of the more conifer-laden troughs are sited upon gravels that also support wispy decorative grasses, making for a delightful break in the symmetry of plantings; other groups of planters may have compact billowy perennials growing at their feet. There is something blooming almost all year—for us in August some of the highlights were a very small red-blooming salvia variety, a miniature blue campanula, a very dwarf oregano, and some small hostas and saxifrages. Every element used must correspond to all others in correct size, contrasting form, and perhaps bloom sequence to create a perfectly balanced living composition within each trough.

Thousands of plants are on display in the gardens. Given the large number of troughs and the large number of plants in each garden, a complete plant list of conifers is out of the question. Leave it to say that almost all coniferous genera that can be grown in zones 6–7 are represented. Most of these are dwarf and





miniature varieties, but I did see a young South American monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) being used on a temporary basis, adding the bizarre spiky deep green foliage only this plant can offer. Oddly enough, podocarpus can grow nicely right next to abies. Particularly well represented in the troughs are compact hinoki cypress varieties, dwarf sawara cypresses, and miniature firs, junipers, and spruce. However, I must stress that it's one thing to grow conifers in troughs, and quite another to grow 16 happy plants of very different ecologies representing four or five continents side by side, while defying several "rules" of horticultural care at the same time. And this is clearly not achieved by accident.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing elements of the gardens is the maintenance scheme, which takes place behind the scenes. The gardens are tended once a week on the weekends; this involves watering when rainfall is not abundant, pruning, cleaning, disbudding, root pruning,

occasional plant rotation, and the usual garden tasks. During our visit, not one leaf was out of place—these gardens are kept super-tidy! All materials must come up the elevators (as they did during installation), and that means going through all that security each time. Susan insists on doing this personally, and she commutes into town from Ossining, New York, which is more than an hour away. Just coming to work, finding parking, and gaining access must be a major hassle. This is not just taking care of Grandma's begonias while she's out of town!

I had to ask about what happened to the gardens during the 9/11 catastrophe. Fortunately, Susan explained, the gardens were located far enough uptown to have escaped the fallout from the airborne debris discharged by the explosions and collapse of the twin towers. The real impact upon the garden was the increased security, making servicing the account even more complex and time consuming than it had been before. No longer could work

trucks be parked at the curb for extended periods. Badges and high security became facts of life.

These gardens are a true testament to a rare combination of essential factors that work very well together here. An accommodating yet demanding and well-funded client, a brilliant designer and



plantswoman left free to experiment, and some very cooperative plants have joined forces to create a wonderfully delightful piece of work. Very different from traditional gardens in the ground, these rooftop treasures still provide the same level of pleasure. Susan Keiser has shown how varied and clever we can be in our pursuit of living beauty, in spite of working in an environment that appears to be almost forbidding to plant life. And to our collective delight, in this particular case, smaller is better, and miniature is even better than that!

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 focuses on residential design and installation in western North Carolina. Bruce served as ACS Southeastern Regional President from 1999–2001. He is looking forward to seeing fellow society members during the ACS National Meeting this June in nearby Charlotte.

Photo Credit:
Pages 34 and 37 Bruce Appeldoorn
Pages 35 and 36 Susan Keiser



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An Update and Thank You from ACS Scholarship Winner Marlyse Duguid



As many conifer enthusiasts know, the role of horticulture is not necessarily distinct from conservation. Traditionally the roles of horticulturists and conservationists were one in the same; the first plant explorers collected specimens to enjoy in garden collections, but also to understand and protect the diversity of plant life here on earth. Their discoveries are preserved in our gardens and public spaces.

My undergraduate training is in horticulture, and I spent the nine years prior to my graduate study working in the field. My love of plants has always been deeply intertwined with my personal environmentalism, and it was a natural transition for me to move from intimate garden landscapes toward larger scale landscape preservation. I am currently pursuing a Master of Forestry at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies where my focus is on conservation of plants and plant communities in managed landscapes.

Conifers are integral parts of the forest and landscapes the world over.

They provide food, fuel, lumber, medicine, and countless other values while contributing beauty to our landscapes and gardens. We are in an age of rising extinction rates, and conifers are no exception. According to Aljos Farjon in *A Natural History of Conifers* (2008) the percentage of threatened conifers worldwide is around 35% of species. Plants are under increasing attack from development and deforestation and we must do what we can to preserve them.

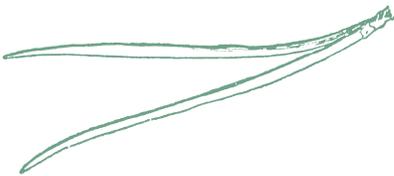
Population growth has put great pressure on the world's forests. Previously "wild" landscapes are transitioning to provide goods and services to a growing number of people worldwide. Studying the interactions of people and plants in managed landscapes gives insight into the complex challenge of plant conservation. By studying natural resource management I am developing the skills I need to be able to balance multiple land use objectives, and apply that knowledge to protect and conserve the plants that occupy these areas. Most of the plants in our gardens are originally from wild origins, and many cultivars originated from a single clone. Witchers'-brooms, sports, and genetic mutations have given us many dwarf conifers to enjoy in our gardens. With the disappearance of these wild areas we lose genetic diversity, as well as the potential for discovery and conservation.

Horticulture has an important, yet often underrated role to play in plant conservation. Botanic gardens and ar-

boreta are crucial repositories for biodiversity and serve an important role in education. ACS has always understood this important linkage and has the goals of conservation and education built directly into its mission statement. Ultimately, I hope to be able to utilize my horticultural training and knowledge, as well as the skills in natural resource management and conservation I have learned during my graduate work, to focus on the preservation and conservation of plants and plant communities. Using both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation as a means to protect the diversity of plants, we can preserve conifers for future use as food, fodder, medicine, lumber, and of course, for enjoyment in our gardens.

I am deeply grateful to the members of The American Conifer Society. The society has its roots in conservation, and I feel that our goals are aligned in this respect. The award of the ACS Scholarship was invaluable in helping me pay for tuition this fall semester. By alleviating some of the financial pressure, I was able to put more time into my research and studies, as well as work on some local conservation projects. Thank you for acknowledging my work, and helping me toward my goals.

Marlyse Duguid



ACS 2010 SCHOLARSHIP CONTACT INFORMATION

The 2010 Application Form and Eligibility Form may be downloaded from the Conifer Society Website after January 1st, 2010. It may also be obtained by mail and e-mail using the contact information below. Please use "ACS Application and Eligibility" as the subject if you choose email.

ACS Scholarship Committee
Gerald Kral
900 Winton Rd., N
Rochester, NY 14609
Email: gkral1@rochester.rr.com

Contact the Editor

Dr. Ronald J. Elardo

5749 Hunter Ct.

Adrian, MI 49221-

2474

517-902-7230

Email:

conifereditor@yahoo.com

Book Review - CONIFERS OF THE WORLD:

by Tom Cox

The complete reference. Eckenwalder, James E. (2009) Timber Press, Oregon. ISBN -13: 978-0-88192-974-4 \$59.95, hard cover.

Written by Canadian Botanist James Eckenwalder, this is a very good publication if one is seeking taxonomic information at the species level. He provides descriptions of all the known conifer genera in the world along with details on all 546 species he recognizes. It is not a coffee table book with numerous pictures and descriptions of the latest and greatest cultivated varieties (cultivars); in fact, none are listed. Most pictures are of plants in the wild and are in black and white. There are also many line drawings of cones, branches and needles.

I have found the text quite useful as the descriptions of species are quite detailed including their natural distributions and elevational and altitudinal ranges. Under each species, Eckenwalder provides details of their morphological characteristics as well as their taxonomic differences. He devotes an entire paragraph to interesting anecdotal details of their morphological characteristics as well as their taxonomic differences. He also devotes an entire paragraph to interesting anecdotal information such as location of the champion tree within the species, unique characteristics of the species within the genus and regional differences.

The book's format is easy to use with each genus being listed alphabetically, followed by its various species. Another useful feature is the addition of common

plant names alongside the scientific name. A botanical glossary is also included at the end. Like most books of this nature, botanical features are shown in metric measurements.

In a number of instances, Eckenwalder is incorrect in his rating of zone hardness for various species that have performed well in Zone 7 and 8 where he rates them as Zone 9. As he correctly points out, "...there is no substitute for actual experience in the ground with conifers rather than predictions based purely on the native habitat." The potential downside to these generalizations, of course, is that gardeners may not be tempted to try something that is rated as tender.

I recently received some correspondence from Mr. John Silba, Alumni Professor – The State University of New York (SUNY) and former Adjunct Professor- SUNY, Farmingdale, Florida who is of the opinion that Eckenwalder recognizes too few taxa. While it is likely that such disagreements are of much interest to our average reader, it is noteworthy to point out that there are differing opinions within the scientific community as to correct taxonomy and seldom do two publications by different authors exactly line up. This can be summarized by pointing out that certain taxonomists tend to recognize plant variants that they consider to have minor differences as being the same species (referred to as **Lumpers**), while others treat these variants as distinct species, subspecies or varieties (referred to as **Splitters**). Eckenwalder treats ques-

tions of species recognition at some length in the introductory chapter “Conifer Classification”, where he explicitly places himself in the “lumper” category. On page 19 he states, “Finding a suitable balance between lumping and splitting is always a challenge and is often inherently subjective, a result of emphasizing different aspects of agreed-upon relationships. We can look forward to continuing debates about how many conifer species there are for a long time to come.” This is why he recognizes only 546 species, whereas others have recognized 600 or more. Because variations that may appear small to some taxonomists can seem important to others, and can be quite significant in a horticultural context, these questions will continue to be very relevant for the conifer community.

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Nominations Sought for 2011 American Conifer Society Awards of Merit

Every year the American Conifer Society honors its members with Awards of Merit. Nominations for next year's recipients must be received by November 30, 2010.

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

This award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the American Conifer Society through their service, enthusiasm, commitment and promotion of membership in the Society.

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

Award of Merit for Development in the Field of Conifers

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

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

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

Please send your nominations to:

Susan Martin

175 Charisma Lane

Lewisville, NC. 27023-9611

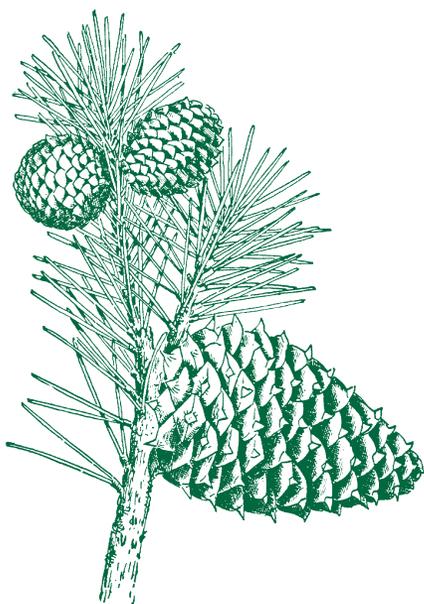
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The Jean Iseli Memorial Award

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED AND MUST BE RECEIVED BY
JUNE 1, 2010

The American Conifer Society, which supports the development, conservation and propagation of conifers with an emphasis on dwarf or unusual varieties, awards a \$3,000 grant to a public garden, arboretum or horticultural institution.

The award was established in 1986 in honor of the memory of plantsman, Jean Iseli of Boring, Oregon. Jean Iseli was an ACS founder and conifer propagator.

Proposals must contain the following:

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

Send Applications to:

Ethan Johnson
ethjohnson@yahoo.com (Microsoft Word documents)

or by regular mail
c/o The Holden Arboretum
9500 Sperry Road
Kirtland, OH 44094

Ethan Johnson chairs a three-person committee that reviews applications and makes its recommendation to the ACS Board of Directors at the annual summer meeting.

Announcements of the award recipient will be made by
August 1, 2010.

Northeastern Region News

The Northeastern Region will hold its conference on September 24 & 25, 2010 in northern Fairfield and Litchfield Counties, Connecticut.

The scenic northwest corner of Connecticut is known for its rolling hills, historic colonial towns, picturesque lakes, and thousands of acres of farms, forests and parks. It also has a fair share of swanky country inns, high-quality antique shops, artisan boutiques, art galleries, and fine restaurants serving an innovative cuisine drawn largely from small local farms and markets.

Our keynote speaker will be Larry Weaner, a practicing professional landscape designer since 1977. Influenced by the work of E.H. Wilson and other notable plant collectors, he started his career working for Weston Nurseries in Massachusetts, and so had an early love of conifers and woody ornamentals. He founded his own landscape design firm in 1982, and has earned a national reputation for his work combining the environmental sciences and garden design, as well as for tirelessly advocating for and educating about landscaping with native plants. Larry's projects have been featured in national and international publications, and have been included in garden tours sponsored by the Association of Professional Landscape Designers, The American Horticulture Society and The Garden Conservancy. He has been involved with numerous horticultural and environmental organizations throughout the United States, including the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, New England Wild Flower Society, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center. He developed the "New Directions in the American Landscape" conference and lec-

ture series, which has a dedicated following.

Among the gardens we will be visiting is member Peter Rostenberg's, a 30-year adventure in conquering many challenges—including dense woods, and a rocky, windy site—to create a tranquil, thoughtfully arranged hillside scene.



Peter Rostenberg's garden.
Photo by Susan Manning



Peter Rostenberg's garden.
Photo by Susan Manning



Peter Rostenberg's garden.
Photo by Susan Manning

ing: I intended for each grouping to do double or triple duty outside and inside the house. They should look good as one walks around; they had to pass my "uplifting-on-entering-the-property" test. And, most important, each grouping must fill every first floor window and door view with its own amazing garden view.



From Zarinna Mulla's garden, a spectacular site overlooking beautiful Shepaug Reservoir © Richard Wanderman.

Lunch will be at Zarinna Mulla's garden, a spectacular site overlooking beautiful Shepaug Reservoir, where the beginning autumn colors should be inspiring. Zarinna, a landscape designer who also commercially grows grasses and unusual small ornamental trees, has a young garden, but she has just incorporated a large portion of Dennis Dodge's Bethlehem Nursery inventory, which includes some interesting and rare cultivars. And the site speaks for itself!



Peter Rostenberg's garden.
Photo by Susan Manning

The Danbury Park Plaza Hotel will host our event. The keynote speech will be given on Friday, September 24; garden visits on Saturday, September 25 and our renowned silent auction will be that evening, featuring plants from some of the great nurseries in the area, including Bethlehem, Oliver's, Broken Arrow, and Hard-scrabble Farm.

According to Peter:

I started with young specimens given to me as gifts by many of the most distinguished plantsmen of the area, including some of the early ACS founders. Those original undersized conifers were planted out, and visualized as elements of the paint-

Keep an eye on the ACS Website for more information; we're still visiting gardens in the area which will become part of the tour.

Central Region News

The Central Region's membership meeting will be in Milwaukee, Wisconsin this year on July 15-17. This year we have two speakers scheduled for the event. Ed Lyon the director of Centennial Gardens at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Melinda Meyer an award winning author, columnist, and gardening expert.

Garden tours will include the castle like home of Chip Paquelet. Beautiful landscaping surrounds the home with great selections of conifers used as the primary plant material and displayed in many unique ways. There are wonderful vistas from the top of the hill that transcends down to Pewaukee Lake.

In addition, we have three other gardens to visit and they are all close together. The Central region is well known for our great auctions and this year's promises to continue the tradition. Check the ACS Website for more information.

We are also planning some smaller rendezvous so check the website to find times and locations.

The Central Region has also developed a reference garden program to make our membership aware of collections of conifers throughout our region. Public gardens and arboretums are encouraged to participate. Information can be found on the ACS website.

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<i>Southeastern Region</i>	Duane Ridenour, P.O. Box 361, Jacksboro, TN 37757 PH (865) 310-1026

Conifer Society Staff

<i>National Office</i>	John Martin, 175 Charisma Lane, Lewisville, NC 27023-9611 PH (336) 945-0483, FAX (336) 945-0484, E-mail: conifersociety@aol.com
<i>Editor, Conifer Quarterly</i>	Dr. Ronald J. Elardo, 5749 Hunter Ct., Adrian, MI 49221-2474 PH (517) 902-7230 E-mail: conifereditor@yahoo.com

<i>Graphic Design & Printing</i>	Monya Barnes, 2255 Barrett Drive, Cumming, GA 30040 PH (770) 888-0434, E-mail: monya@mindspring.com
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Peter Rostenberg's garden. A venue for the Northeastern Region conference to be held September 24 & 25, 2010. See Region News.
Photo by Susan Manning.



Various juniper, spruce, pine, and hemlock with heather and other companions in the Blue Hill Maine garden of ACS members Don and Susan Church. For more information go to www.bluehillcountrygarden.com.