

# Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 24 No. 3

Summer 2007



**A scene from the Stegmaier garden  
featured inside this issue**

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# Conifer Quarterly

Summer 2007  
Volume 24, No 3

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is indeed ironic that I began my previous "President's Message" with the thought of late spring frosts and how we as gardeners always breathe a sigh of relief when the danger has passed. As I wrote that in late February, I could not have predicted what Mother Nature had in store for us. The winter here had been mild, and by early April, plants were actively growing and had leafed out. Over the Easter weekend, we experienced one of the worst late spring freezes on record here in the South. According to a source connected with the University of Tennessee, the last freeze of this magnitude occurred 118 years ago. Over a three-day period, the temperature dipped to a low of 18 degrees. Nurseries and homeowners sustained record losses to many woody ornamentals. In Tennessee, where a high percentage of the nation's dogwoods (*Cornus*) are grown, it is estimated that it will take at least two years before the supply is again available in any numbers. The largest single loss for me was the loss of numerous cultivars of young Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) that were killed or severely damaged. On the positive side, no conifers were lost, and aside from a bit of nip to the new growth, all looked completely unscathed.

As much of our region tends to focus on spring bloom, many of the old standbys such as azaleas and hydrangeas will be absent from the usual floral show. This again affirms the utility of conifers in the landscape and how they allow so much color to be realized. I can only hope that whatever part of the country you garden in – or if your business is related to horticulture – that you have begun the recovery process.

Evelyn and I just returned from a

three-week trip to New Zealand and have never visited a more beautiful place. While there, we visited several nurseries and devoted a great deal of time to the study of indigenous conifers and their suitability in our Zone 7 climate. See the article later in this issue.

On a business note, it looks as though we will have at least 185 attendees at our national meeting, which will make this one of the highest attendances at any ACS meeting. Further, as of this writing, the post tour has 73 participants. I am looking forward to the event as well as the opportunity to see many of you again. While this meeting will be our 25<sup>th</sup>, the ACS will officially celebrate its 25-year anniversary in 2008. Our meeting planners, as well as our official historian, are busy putting together an event worthy of 25 years as a society. One of the items that should generate a great deal of interest is a condensed history of the ACS that will be made available. In my last president's message, I made mention of an international trip to England and perhaps elsewhere. Since no post tour is planned for 2008, this trip will take its place.

While on the British theme, the ACS received an invitation from David Rae, Chairman of the Royal Horticultural Society Advisory Panel on Conifer Registration, for the American Conifer Society to nominate a Corresponding Member of the Panel. We responded by appointing Rich Larson from the Dawes Arboretum as our representative. Rich is eminently qualified, and we are fortunate to have him represent us. Sue Martin (formerly with the National Arboretum) and Ethan Johnson (Holden Arboretum) have agreed to serve in an advisory capacity to Rich. This is a significant milestone for the Society and one that

recognizes our standing in the world community.

By the time you read this, there will have been regional elections in each of our four regions, and you will all have new directors. I want to personally thank those directors whose terms have expired for their service and for making my job much easier as a result of their cooperation. Also, on behalf of the Society, I want to welcome our newly elected directors to the Board. Thank you for your willingness to volunteer your time and energy.

Speaking of supporting the ACS, I was saddened by the news that long-term ACS member George Okken had passed away. While I didn't know George well, I am aware that he was a huge supporter of our Society. My last memory of him was at the NE Region meeting in Connecticut in 2006. When we arrived at the hotel after a long drive, there was George sitting outside, cigarette in hand, bearing a huge smile that said "glad to see you." Later at the auction, I recall that he was the largest donor of plants, and that significantly contributed to the financial success of the event. In brief, we all have met people that are too soon gone, and we then wish we had gotten to know them better. He was a great lover of plants, and the ACS will miss his presence.

I hope the summer is kind to your garden and that somewhere in our travels we meet. Please continue to check the ACS Web site – [www.conifersociety.org](http://www.conifersociety.org) – for updates on the regional meetings and other conifer news. I will be attending the Central Region meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, as well as the Southeast meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. If you are unable to attend the national meeting, make plans to participate in one (or more) of the other regional meetings.



Our theme this issue is highway treasures, and we hear from some treasure hunters of the plant world. They may not go to the bottom of the ocean, but there are a few who will climb high for that next spectacular conifer and many others who just look out below for something of special value.

Rich Larson of the Dawes Arboretum found an interesting possibility up a tree. As propagator extraordinaire, when Rich finds a promising plant, he really knows what to do with it. In this issue, he writes about the witches' broom he found in a hemlock and the results of his propagation efforts. It's a dandy.

Several other ACS members show us some treasures they have seen along the way, like Teresa Holmquist who searches for special plants by scanning treetops while traveling. It seems she picked up this habit from witches' broom hunters like Chub Harper. She shares with us photographic proof that her treasure hunting habit is beginning to yield results.

Tom Cox is one of those people who is also looking about for plants, behind the wheel or on foot, near home or across the ocean. While Hansel and Gretel used breadcrumbs, Tom uses plants to get his bearings and tells us about a few he found by being attuned to the plant world, one close to home and some far, far away.

Kimberly Karlin is always on the lookout for news for the *Conifer Quarterly*, but who knew she also searches for interesting plants as she drives around? She often wonders how a beautiful plant near her home came to be where it is, and she takes the time to stop

and snap a photo for us.

In our spring issue, Dr. David Creech pointed out some *Taxodium* treasures, and he continues in this issue with part two. In this article, he discusses the intensity of research sometimes necessary to evaluate potentially promising plants for landscape worthiness, and he talks about the China connection where his colleagues refer to the baldcypress as the "magic tree."

Our cover photo came from Clara and David Stegmaier's garden in Shawnee, Kansas. Look inside to see and read more about how their beautiful garden, chock-full of conifers, came to be. Seems it all started with just one little conifer treasure. Hmm... that sounds familiar.

We ACS members are very fortunate to have intrepid plant hunters who **volunteer** to seek out treasures for us. Each year, the Collectors Conifer of the Year committee spends many hours searching for two very special plants that merit designation as the Collectors Conifer of the Year dwarf or full-size selection. While we anxiously wait to hear about the 2008 selections, let's all enjoy the summer and take notice of nature's

treasures, which are always there to be found.



*Evelyn*

**Next Issue: Fall 2007 – Unusual, Rare and Endangered Conifers**

What stories do you have to share with other readers about threatened conifers or those that have been saved from extinction? Please send your contributions to the Editor by August 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Future issue themes:**

- *Cephalotaxus*
- Hidden Garden Gems
- *Sciadopitys*
- *Tsuga*

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

**SUBMITTING ARTICLES AND IMAGES TO THE CONIFER QUARTERLY**

**Articles - Text file formats**

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

**Photos and other image formats**

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

**IMPORTANT – Digital image resolution guidelines:**

Contributors should verify the pixel resolution of each image before submission. No image less than 900 pixels wide can be considered. A pixel width of 1200 or more

is preferred. Keep in mind that pixels will be lost if excess background area must be cropped out.

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

The editor will make every effort to return original slides and drawings to the sender via First Class Mail after the issue is published. However, the American Conifer Society cannot be responsible for materials lost during shipping. Digital media such as CDs will not be returned unless specifically requested within three months after publication.

# *Tsuga canadensis* 'Little Granny' Profile of a witches' broom

Article & Photos by Richard A. Larson

In the fall of 1997, I became aware of a witches' broom growing in the village of Granville, Ohio, just a few miles northwest of The Dawes Arboretum. The late Everett Albyn, a fine plantsman during his lifetime and originator of Albyns prostrate Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* 'Albyns'), had noticed this hemlock broom during his consultations with the owners, Dorothy and Richard Mann. Naturally, I felt compelled to take a look and, accompanied with a volunteer of mine, made arrangements with Dorothy Mann during the latter part of November to see the broom and to take cuttings.

My first look at it was from a distance of about 200 yards on an adjacent street that ran parallel to the owner's property. The broom could be clearly viewed from this vantage point, as it was suspended precariously on a lower branch that was quite distended from the main canopy of the tree. It appeared to be a nearly perfect, dark green little ball – a lollipop on a stick. After a brief salutation with the owner and a cup of coffee, I proceeded to view this broom "up close and personal" and I set myself to the real task at hand the propagation of this anomaly.

Most brooms look better from a distance than from close up and this one was no exception. The hemlock broom was an old timer, very densely branched and about 4 feet (1.2 m) in diameter. It

was so tight that its lower branches were dying out from overcrowding and self-shading. It had been mostly neglected because the owner was entirely unsure of the proper maintenance and so had left it alone. It required about an hour to remove the dead wood from the broom and in the process, of course, I secured more than enough propagules to take back with me.

By removing a few large branches from the main stem, I exposed this broom to more light; these overtopping



*Tsuga canadensis* broom

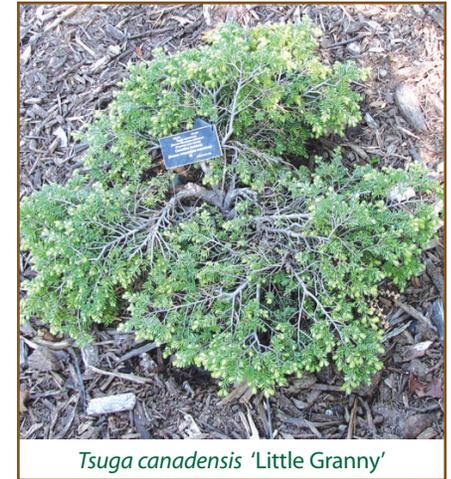
branches might, I judged, hasten its decline by casting too much shade upon it.

I proceeded to stick a number of cuttings upon my return to The Dawes. The propagation of hemlocks from cuttings can be problematic; some clones root easily at a rate of 80 percent or higher while others root poorly or not at all. Fortunately, I succeeded to root about 50 percent of the cuttings by lightly wounding them and applying auxin at a rate of 5,000 ppm. This rate of success surprised me since the relatively non-vigorous and mature condition of brooms in the wild usually prevents a high rate of success. I bolstered my propagation efforts by successfully grafting several scions the following January.

In the spring of 2000, a grafted specimen was planted in the conifer glen, and it has been growing slowly in its original spot since that time. In six and a half years, the broom has grown to just 12.5 inches (31 cm) tall by 26 inches (66 cm) wide. Its needles retain an excellent dark green winter color. I liken this broom to *Tsuga canadensis* 'Minima', a beautiful clone of long-time standing, but it stays lower and grows a little wider than 'Minima'.

In January of 2007, I registered this clone with the Royal Horticultural Society in England under the name *T. canadensis* 'Little Granny', which I felt provided a reference to the location of the original broom.

There is, of course, a wide array of wonderful hemlock brooms to choose from but 'Little Granny' is one of the better ones I have seen, and its slow growth should make it a desirable addition to any dwarf conifer or rock garden collection.



*Tsuga canadensis* 'Little Granny'

*About the author:* Richard Larson, a long-time ACS member and supporter, has been Plant Propagator at The Dawes Arboretum since 1988. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees, both in horticulture, from the University of Wisconsin. At The Dawes, he manages the nursery and is responsible for acquiring plants, exchange and propagation, holding plant clinics, and teaching classes in-house and for various organizations. He writes for The Dawes Arboretum's *Journal* and for *Happenings*, its monthly publication, as well as for other professional publications.

# Pardon Me, but Is Your Girdle Too Tight?

by Ellen Kelley

Pity the poor tree or shrub doomed to a short, painful life and death by suffocation. Pity the poor gardener who, having selected just the right plant for the right spot, gets instead a suffering plant and a thinner wallet.

A couple of problems that originate with plant growers are passed along to unsuspecting consumers of balled and burlapped (B&B) and container plants. Both problems are related to growing practices.

The first problem is evident when the tree has no visible root flare, indicating that it's too deep in the ball or container. Trees that are too deep smother since the roots do not have access to the oxygen they need. The root flare should be visible, both in the container or root ball and after planting. Traditional planting instructions advise planting with the top of the root ball even with the soil line, or slightly above in clay soil. Now, there is ample evidence that nursery stock is coming from growers with the root flare from 2 inches to as much as 10 inches below the soil in the container or root ball. If this is the case, following traditional planting advice may result in trees being planted too deep.

The second problem may be harder to identify before the tree is removed from the burlap or container. If the plant has spent any of its life in a container, it may have developed girdling roots.

These are roots that circle around the base of the trunk, eventually strangling the tree to death. They form when the pot in which they are growing becomes too small for their roots to spread out. Ideally, at that point it is time to move the plant to a larger pot. Often this is not done soon enough. I have had plants that had several sets of girdling roots.

Together, these problems probably account for 85 to 90 percent of tree failure during the first ten years of a tree's life. With that in mind, the best advice is to check any tree or shrub carefully before you take it home. Look for a visible root flare and roots that are not twisted, circling, or emerging from the bottom of the container, signs that the tree has probably been in the container too long. You can find the root flare by very gently scraping the soil away from the trunk. This may also reveal the presence of girdling roots.

Very small girdling roots can be pruned or untangled. The root ball of a container-grown plant can be vertically scored in three or four places to break up the roots before it is planted. In severe cases, I return the plant to the nursery or garden center. This calls attention to the problem and puts the plant retailer on notice that there are customers knowledgeable enough to reject plants that probably will not thrive. While many nurseries and garden centers guarantee

their plants for a year, that is not usually long enough for problems to appear.

I gave up wearing a girdle years ago, but I know how it feels.

*About the author:* Ellen Kelley is an Iowa State University Master Gardener and an Iowa Community Tree Steward. She is a member of the Bettendorf Tree Board and Trees Are Us Committee, and was honored in 2002 as the Urban Forestry Volunteer of the Year for the state of Iowa. In 2003, she founded Partners in Horticulture, which offers a Certificate in Home Horticulture, a 40-hour program focused on promoting sustainable landscapes. Ellen is national vice president/treasurer of the American Conifer Society. Thoroughly infected by Chub Harper with Conifer Addictive Syndrome, she and husband Jim have over 300 conifers in their home landscape.

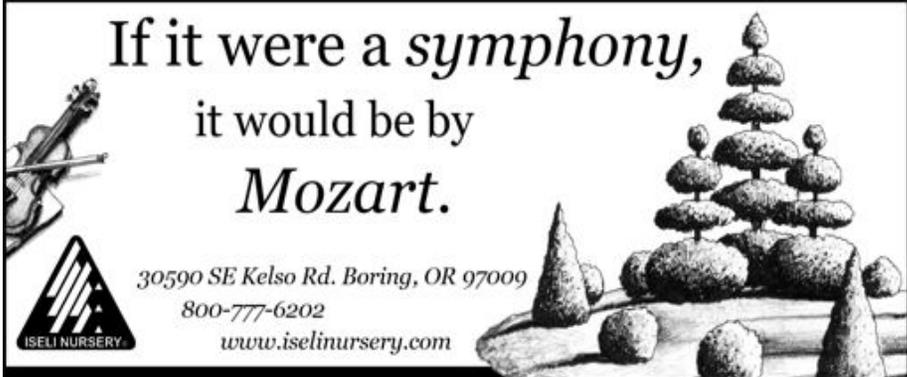
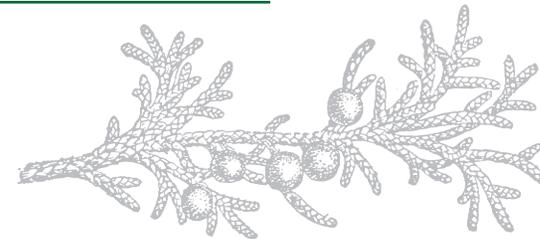


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# Taxodium Studies at the SFA Mast Arboretum -Part Two

Article & Photos by Dr. David Creech

Since Part One appeared in our last issue (Vol. 24 No. 2 Spring 2007), the correct nomenclature for Montezuma cypress has been determined to be *Taxodium distichum* var. *mexicanum* (Carriere) Gordon not *Taxodium distichum* var. *mucronatum*. For those readers who have not read Part One, we reprint some of Dr. Creech's opening comments from Part One, taking into account that change in nomenclature:

*Taxodium* is a deciduous conifer in the family Cupressaceae, one of several genera in the family commonly known as cypresses. Once three separate species under the same genus *Taxodium*, current taxonomy places *Taxodium* as one species with three botanical varieties (Arnold and Denny 2006)

*Taxodium distichum* (L.) Rich. var. *distichum* (Baldcypress – BC)

*Taxodium distichum* var. *imbricarium* (Nutt.) Croom (Pondcypress – PC)

*Taxodium distichum* var. *mexicanum* (Carriere) Gordon (Montezuma cypress – MC)

For the purpose of brevity, baldcypress, pondcypress, Montezuma cypress, and *Taxodium distichum* 'Nanjing Beauty' (a cross of Baldcypress X Montezuma cypress) will be referred to in this thesis as BC, PC, MC and T302 respectively.

## Genetic Variation in *Taxodium*

Genetic variation in *Taxodium* has received limited attention in the United States and most trees in the nursery industry are seedlings from a wide range of provenances. In many landscapes across the southern United States, a "line" of uniform baldcypress at planting almost always evolves into a row of varied forms, growth rates, foliage color, limb structure, etc. Horticultural varieties (cultivars) are rarely encountered outside of botanical gardens and arboreta. Since grafting is the common method to propagate unique cultivars, there has never really been an opportunity to quickly build large numbers.

## Research in the United States

Most U.S. research has dealt with *Taxodium* as a forest tree and not as an ornamental for the nursery and landscape industry. Ecology studies abound. Salt tolerance and plant response to brackish water studies are well documented. It is only in the last few decades, however, that the potential for genetic improvement of *Taxodium* for landscape purposes has received attention. Arnold and Denny at Texas A&M University are currently screening 35 genotypes from a wide variety of provenances across the southern United States and Mexico for salt and alkalinity tolerance and good landscape form (Arnold, personal com-

munication, 2006). They report there is an influence of seed source on tolerance to salt, high pH and alkalinity. Mexican MC and western BC were generally less adversely affected by higher alkalinity levels than more eastern U.S. populations (Denny et al. (2006). At the University of Florida, Rockwood is evaluating *Taxodium* seed sources and field trials are underway (Rockwood, personal communication, 2006). While tolerance to fly ash amended soil conditions is a major focus, the program is also screening for landscape attributes. Finally, Krauss at the Wetlands Research Center is evaluating a wide range of salt-tolerant BC from various provenances in the coastal southern United States (Krauss, personal communication, 2006). At Stephen F. Austin

State University, we have a long history of acquiring as many *Taxodium* horticultural varieties and genotypes as possible. They are planted in a documented collection in the SFA Mast Arboretum. We are also screening over 1000 seedlings of MC from seed collected near Las Cruces, New Mexico, which are thought to have substantially increased winter hardiness. There are other collections of *Taxodium* in the southern United States, mostly in arboreta, botanical gardens and private collections. Sharing the unique genotypes and using them for parents in a controlled-cross program holds great promise for future improvement.

## Hybrids

Hardin (1971) was first to speculate on



Taxodium genotypes at Texas A&M University



MC from New Mexico seed in evaluation plots at SFA

the nature of intermediates where BC and PC ranges overlap. While most studies conclude that BC and PC are not distinctly different enough to be a separate species, researchers note that there is considerable variation in characteristics and the genetic foundation for improvement is quite broad (Lickey and Walker 2002). In the western US range of BC, *Taxodium* appears to combine characteristics of MC. This may be an indication of many years of commingled genetics. Perhaps surprising to some, it is only in China that controlled cross *Taxodium* breeding, evaluation and selection has evolved into a major effort.

### The China Connection

In China, *Taxodium* is an “exotic” introduced in the late 1800s from the United States. The tree has found favor

in southern and southeastern China for many years, but in the last few decades, the use of *Taxodium* has exploded with millions of trees being grown by the nursery industry. The species is in far greater use there than in the United States. My Chinese colleagues refer to BC as the “magic tree”, simply because it is drought, flood, salt, alkalinity and typhoon tolerant, is relatively pest free, and produces high-value lumber. Most importantly, the fact that the tree can live for thousands of years is another attribute found highly favored in China. With over 8000 years of history, the Chinese are famous for thinking ahead, way ahead.

Have you ever heard of any country with a 1000-year master plan? In southeastern China, every highway, road, canal, railroad track, public park and open space is being thickly planted to a



Taxodium nursery plots near Ningbo China

wide range of urban trees. *Taxodium* is a big part of the urban “greening” of China, a huge undertaking fed by tens of thousands of acres of nurseries in the region. BC plays a big role in an enormous coastal windbreak forest project on the inland side of massive dikes north and south of Shanghai, a project for which the central government has earmarked billions of assistance dollars.

### My Chinese colleagues refer to BC as the “magic tree”

The *Taxodium* breeding program of the Nanjing Botanical Garden and other institutions in China has a long history.

Chinese scientists are convinced that controlled *Taxodium* hybridization promises to combine the best characteristics of superior parents. In the late 1970’s, Professor Chen Yonghui crossed healthy BC trees in the Nanjing garden with pollen from a MC grown in a greenhouse because the season was too short in Nanjing to make healthy viable pollen. The pollen was used on several healthy noteworthy BC trees and over five hundred seedlings were planted. In 1988, clones T302 (BC X MC), T401 (PC X MC), and T202 (PC X BC) were selected for growth rate and tolerance to alkaline and salt-rich coastal floodplains. Other attributes of T302 include good columnar form, foliage reten-



'Nanjing Beauty' at Suzhou government nursery

tion in winter, and no knees. All hybrids are intermediate types as far as photosynthetic activities are concerned and the genetic influence of the male parent was greater than that of the female. The mean annual increment and current annual increment curve of volume indicate that T302 grows well under alkaline soil condition ( $pH \leq 8.5$ ), while BC would be comparatively inhibited (Zhou, K. et al. 2000). T302 is recommended in China for soils with pH 8.0~8.5 and salt concentrations  $< 2$  ppt ( $34 \text{ moles} \times \text{m}^{-3}$ ). T301, T401, and T302 have higher salt tolerance than BC and PC. Other attributes of T302 included 159% faster growth than BC, good columnar form, longer foliage retention in fall and early

winter, and no knees (Chen, Y. et al. 1987).

*Taxodium* 'Zhongshansha 302' (T302) has been in the United States since January 2002 and is currently under evaluation in over 50 locations there. The clone was named 'Nanjing Beauty' in 2004 as a cooperative introduction of the SFA Mast Arboretum and Nanjing Botanical Garden. In March 2005, the SFA Mast Arboretum received two new clones (T140 and T27) from Professor Yin Yunlong's program at the Nanjing Botanical Garden. T140 and T27 are considered more evergreen than T302 and both demonstrate strong salt tolerance. The clones were selected from a field population of T302 X MC with strong

MC characteristics and improvements in growth rate, salt tolerance, form and vigor. T140 grows faster than T27, which produces a wider profile. Nanjing scientists believe they have selected another clone, T1, that may be superior to both T140 and T27, but more genotype X environment studies are needed.

The foundations of the most recent selections are via crosses made by Professors Chen and Liu in 1992 at the Nanjing Botanical Garden. Pollen from MC was applied to a female T302 and fifteen selections were made in 1995. The main characteristics for selection were 1) fast growth rate, 2) dark green color during



*Taxodium* 302 on own roots and grafted on BC in foreground near Suzhou China

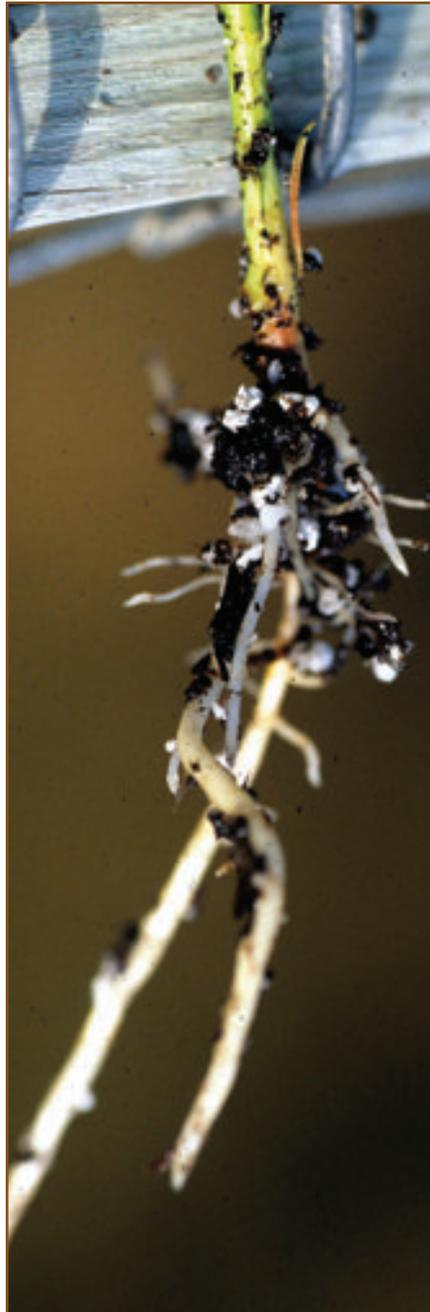


Salt study at SFA Lijing Zhou

the growing season and a red-orange leaf color in the autumn and 3) evergreen leaves. In 2006 or 2007, the results from T140 and T27 will be reported and registered with the Chinese Forestry Department. It will be at least four years before T140 and T27 enter commerce. In June, 2005 there were less than 100 plants each of these two clones. T118, T120, and T149 have already been registered with the Chinese Forestry Department at the provincial level while T302 has been registered at the national level.

### Propagation

For superior clones to make a substantial impact on nursery numbers, it is important to propagate asexually. Cutting propagation of *Taxodium* is generally reported as difficult and that is particularly true if cuttings are taken from older trees. Young trees root with greater ease. Professor Yunlong reports that 'Nanjing Beauty', selected in 1988, has become more difficult to root over time, a condition he attributed to chronological and physiological age factors. To counter lower rooting percentages, a strict protocol for achieving cutting propagation success has been developed. Small well-rooted liners are field planted at close spacing and grown one year (rows are approximately three feet apart with plants about a foot apart in the row). The young trees reach three to four feet in the first growing season. Then in that first winter, they are cut to one foot tall. These short pollarded trees produce vigorous upright shoots in the spring. Cuttings are collected in early summer and one upright shoot is left on the stock tree to grow for the rest of the season into a straight six-to eight-foot tree, ready for sale. Cuttings



Young clones can be rooted at high percentages

from upright shoots produce upright growing plants of better form than trees produced from cuttings taken from side branches (avoiding the problem with plagiotropic growth). Cuttings are rooted under part shade to sun using intermittent mist and a well drained mix in deep rooting beds. While rooting hormones are utilized, cutting wood quality and maintaining good turgor are recognized as critical for high rooting percentages (80+% ). In our studies at SFA, four cutting trials in 2006 indicated that a high concentration of K-IBA (5000 to 10000 PPM) improved rooting as did slightly wounding the basal portion of the stem (Zhou, L. 2007).

### Conclusions

There is little doubt that this wonderful native North American conifer has many attributes. Improving the species through controlled crosses, evaluation, and selection has great promise, simply because this tree is a native of our continent. Superior genotypes are no doubt "right outside our back door". Isn't it ironic that our Chinese friends from across the sea recognized that over fifty years ago while we have only speculated on the topic. Perhaps the time has come for us to do the same!

### Literature Cited:

Arnold, Michael A., Professor, Department of Horticultural Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX



Happy workers in China

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Rockwood, Donald L., Professor, School of Forest Resources and Conservation, University of Florida, Box 110410, Gainesville, FL 32611-0410. Phone: 352 846-0897; Fax: 352 846-1277; E-mail: [dlr@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:dlr@ifas.ufl.edu)

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*About the author:* Dr. David Creech is a Regent's Professor of Horticulture, Stephen F. Austin State University and directs the SFA Mast Arboretum, Pineywoods Native Plant Center, and Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, sixty acres of on-campus gardens with a mission to promote smart plans and plants for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The SFA Mast Arboretum is located on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, USA. Center of the Pineywoods region of Eastern Texas; USDA Hardiness Zone 8; annual rainfall 48"; summers are often hot and dry, winter and spring usually wet and cool with temperatures normally falling into the teens only occasionally during the worst of the winter. Land is gently rolling and soils generally leaning to the acid side. Late spring frosts normally end around mid-March, with first freezes in the fall mid to late November.

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## Letters To The Editor

**To: American Conifer Society**

**Re: Can I prune a weeping conifer?**

As you can see, I'm e-mailing you from Melbourne, Australia, having found your details on the Internet. I cannot get the answer to this question in any of the garden supply outlets in Melbourne; basically, can I prune a weeping conifer which I believe to be a *Picea abies* 'Pendula'? You are probably very busy, but a simple yes/no would be much appreciated.

I know nothing about gardening whatsoever, but the tree was purchased about 7 years ago, and it then stood 6 feet high with a lovely but light sprawling effect. The tree has now grown another 3 feet and has quadrupled its "sprawl" and certainly its weight to the extent that, whilst it is a beautiful feature, it now has an elephant-trunk-like effect that protrudes about 5 feet almost horizontally away from the main trunk. Some of the branches are now running along the ground for a couple of feet. It looks like a hairy mammoth.



It is quite a sight but starting to become a little intrusive, so your advice would be most appreciated. Also, it is only 3 feet from the front windows of the house. Can I expect the root system to be a problem?

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this, and if I am in luck, for sending me your response.

Amanda Black – Melbourne



*Dear Amanda:*

*Thanks for the inquiry. First, the plant is a weeping blue Atlas cedar, which is native to the Atlas Mountains of North Africa. The botanical name is *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula'.*

*The root system should pose no problem. In terms of pruning, this is not a problem as long as you don't remove more than 1/4 of the foliage. Simply decide where you want to make the cut (which should be just above a branch) and make your cut(s) with a sharp saw or pruners. Be careful that the weight of the branch that you are cutting does not split away from what is left. You want a clean cut. Sometimes it may be helpful to make*

*two cuts - one just in front of where your final cut will be made (which takes the weight off) and a second cut at the point to which you want to prune.*

*If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to e-mail. Also, please consider joining the American Conifer Society. We have international members from your area. Visit us again at [www.conifersociety.org](http://www.conifersociety.org).*

*Good luck  
Evelyn*

**To: Tom Cox, President**

**American Conifer Society**

**Re: Update on UT Gardens Knoxville**

I am pleased to report that we have added 104 conifers to the UT Gardens since the ACS meeting in Knoxville last summer. We also will be adding the two 2007 Collectors Conifer of the Year this year. Thanks again for spurring us on and getting us addicted to conifers. I truly have "Addicted Conifer Syndrome" both at work and at home. I'm taking over more land at UT as well as in my neighbor's yard to plant more conifers! I also just renewed my ACS membership.

Susan L. Hamilton, Ed.D.

Associate Professor and  
Director of UT Gardens  
University of Tennessee  
Department of Plant Sciences

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*Abies nordmanniana* 'Golden Spreader'  
Photo Credit: Randall C. Smith, courtesy of Iseli Nursery



*Picea omorika* 'Pimoko'  
Photo Credit: Randall C. Smith, courtesy of Iseli Nursery



*Pinus leucodermis* 'Schmidtii'  
Photo Credit: Randall C. Smith, courtesy of Iseli Nursery



*Abies koreana* 'BlueMagic'  
Photo Credit: Courtesy of Stanley & Sons Nursery



*Larix kaempferi* 'Bambino'  
Photo Credit: Courtesy of Stanley & Sons Nursery

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# I Am Now a Baby Broomer

by Teresa Holmquist

I am now a “Baby Broomer,” having two witches’ broom finds under my belt as a result of my travels with some fine plantsmen. It all started with Chub Harper, and then Rich Eyre, Jeff Rathje, Gary Whittenbaugh, Dave Horst, and Dennis Groh. I have not had many travels with Joe Stupka, but he still owes me a broom-hunting trip for one of the little tricks I helped play on him last year at the ACS Central Region meeting.

This is a big deal for me to find my first witches’ broom because Chub and I are always looking for them during our travels and he can spot one a mile away. He will say to me, “Do you see that broom in that *Taxodium distichum*?” (Where is Dirr’s *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* when I need it?) I know now that this is a common baldcypress but, if you ask me, there is nothing “common” about a baldcypress. What a marvelous tree. We once viewed at least one hundred of them in a row, and sure enough, Chub spotted a broom on the thirtieth tree from the end of the row. The broom was 10 inches high by 10 inches wide and on the backside of the tree, the farmer side. The trees were in full leaf about 400 feet from the interstate highway. Chub just spots these things while he is driving.

The other day when Chub and I were driving back from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, we made a wrong turn as we headed for the Lisbon, Iowa, cemetery to view some old witches’ brooms. After we turned

around, Chub spotted a broom in a Box Elder (*Acer negundo*). Needless to say, we did not get too excited about that find.

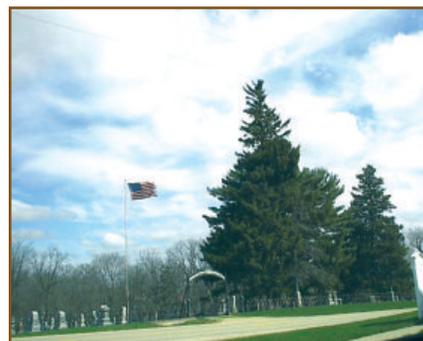
Last month when Chub and I were traveling to Florida, I had my first witches’ broom discovery. We were entering Tennessee and needed to rest. My advice is never miss an opportunity to rest, so we pulled off the interstate highway at the Tennessee visitor’s center and that was where I spotted it – my first witches’ broom. My heartbeat quickened, my brain overloaded, and I started shaking. The driver (Chub) would not pull over. Jealousy is a terrible thing. He found a parking space at the center, about a quarter-mile away from the sighting, and then decided that we should walk back to the witches’ broom to make sure that was what I saw. And, it was!

Since this was my first broom sighting, I wanted to take a picture, so we had to walk the quarter-mile back to the van to get the camera. Then, Chub decided that we should drive back, but there was one little problem – it was a one-way drive going back. Luckily, the problem was easy to solve. So, I just stopped the incoming traffic because they had to slow down anyway to let Chub maneuver back to the start, driving against traffic, to the brooms’ location. People should not wait until the last minute to rest anyway. The broom, in a *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine), was about 20 feet off the ground and about 4 feet high and 4 feet wide. The mother tree was about 40 feet high



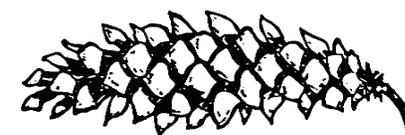
and 20 feet wide with the broom on the southwest side. It was above a maintenance garage, well protected, and a pretty broom.

On another recent return trip from Rochelle, Illinois, we were driving back to Moline on some secondary roads when again my heart beat fast and I loudly exclaimed, “There is another broom!” We had to go to the next drive and turn around to check out my second witches’ broom discovery. It is fun and exciting to find a broom, even if this one was on a Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), which is very common in the Midwest, especially in old cemeteries. Even so, I had to record this find with the camera to commemorate my second discovery. I named this one to indicate its size, *Picea abies* ‘Teresa’s Giant’. Now I am hooked and ready for the challenge to find the next



witches’ broom.

Scoping out the territory for more brooms as you travel makes travel more interesting. I recommend you often take advantage of the rest stops to maybe find a witches’ broom, but do remember if you are traveling in Tennessee and stop at the visitor’s center just off Interstate 24 near Clarksville, Tennessee, that broom is MINE, and it should have a proper name like ‘Teresa’s Resting’.



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# Gardening with Conifers

## An Affair Out of Control: Vision Unlimited

Photos and text by David Stegmaier



This is a story about how my lifelong interest in nature and all that grows in the outdoors became a hobby of collecting conifers, and how purchasing unique plants to enhance our home landscape in Shawnee, Kansas, soon became a hobby that my wife Clara and I share. After retiring in 2001, I needed a new interest to fill the retirement hours. Developing a conifer garden became the motivation for a new hobby to accomplish this retirement goal.

The activity of working the soil, the pleasure of enjoying nature, and the creation of a beautiful landscape to enhance the beauty of our home were then, and

are now, a few of the benefits of my post-retirement hobby. The texture, shape, and year-round color of conifers provide continual stimulation to envision and develop plans for creating beauty in our landscape.

After having the pleasure of visiting the garden of Marvin Snyder (a past president of the American Conifer Society and founder of the Overland Park, Kansas, Pines and Needles Conifer Club), we set out on a mission to purchase our first conifer. We were overwhelmed with choices, and funds were limited, but the purchase of a *Picea bicolor* 'Howell's Dwarf' for a reasonable



price at a local nursery was the beginning of our excitement to grow a conifer collection.

Realizing the need to have a plan and the importance that anchor plants would play in it, I soon discovered the beauty and utility of using pendulous forms as anchors in the design. I drew all



of the designs and developed each garden, adding rocks to create a natural landscape. This has been an ongoing project for the past eight years, beginning from the front of the house to the street on the west side of the driveway and completing one section each year. This spread to the east side of the driveway, moving from the front of the house to the rear of the house on the east side, then into the backyard.

The backyard brought much more space for creating gardens. The previous landscaping included plantings of perennials, roses, cacti, etc. Once conifers were discovered, the others were eliminated.



By planting dwarf ginkgo biloba, Japanese maples, hostas, rhododendrons, azaleas, and various ground covers and selected perennials, each garden was de-



veloped from an idea that grew into a vision, and then became a reality. The use of Japanese pagodas and lanterns add special interest to the design. Benches placed here and there give a place to rest and view the gardens from another direction and provide a comfortable setting for entertaining and for enjoying the outdoors when we move from the interior hibernation of winter to the outdoor garden. Preparation of the garden is a dual effort. I do the planting. Clara is the detail person. She scopes the areas for any foreign matter, be it trash, dried leaves, or a pesky weed. Wind is definitely our garden's enemy. Kansas has no shortage of windy days, and some can be severe. (Remember poor Dorothy and Toto?)

In spring, we watch as each conifer changes from the winter color. The days are counted until plants ordered in December begin to arrive in late March. At the time of this writing, we anxiously await the arrival of *Picea orientalis* 'Tom Thumb', the 2007 Collectors Conifer of the Year dwarf selection. Each sunny day, as the temperature rises, I find myself taking yard tours, summarizing the growth and strength of each plant. As I look for spring buds and early signs of a new season to garden, I'm filled with joy and anticipation. I am ever thankful for this hobby; for a strong, healthy body; and for a quest to learn, design, plant, and share the tremendous beauty and enjoyment of gardening.

We became active members of the



local Pines & Needles club. Through this group, we enjoy many friendships. It is a wonderful resource for gardening knowledge. We enjoy and benefit meaningfully from sharing successes and opening our gardens for local members to view, photograph, take notes, and discuss our hobbies-in-common.

The local club meets twice each year. In June of 2006, we felt honored to open our gardens to club members. Among our 200+ conifers and various perennials, the members were rapidly penning notes and taking photos. We always enjoy seeing visitors examine every inch of ground that is planted. They read

the plant markers and make lists of desirable choices to consider for their personal spaces. This is one of the rewards of sharing our garden with others.

Over the years, we have learned much about good gardening: the proper gloves, clippers, trimmers, garden carts, wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, knee pads, etc. We have even purchased a 14-inch battery-operated mower to get into tight areas. This could be a condition. We will call it "coniferitis" – an inflammation of the body, mind, and spirit causing one to dig in the dirt, haul heavy rocks, let skin turn brown, and keep eyes ever focused

on the vision of acquiring a new conifer.

We no longer fret about a conifer that doesn't make it or whether we must eliminate one that proves to be not the right choice. We receive too much pleasure in just adding more.

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*About the author:* David and Clara Stegmaier are long-time members of the ACS.

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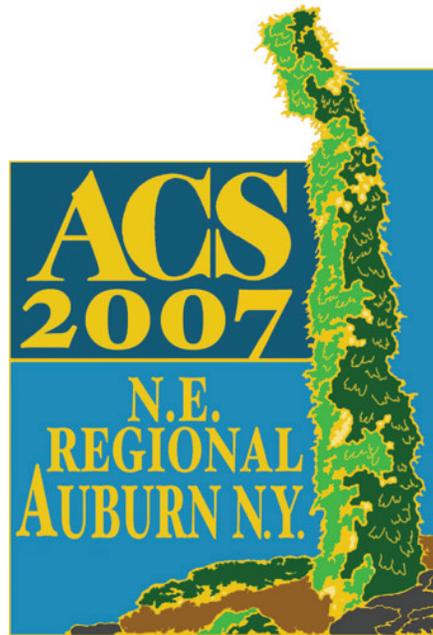
## What's with the Pins?

by Gerald P. Kral

In 2004, the NE Regional Organizing Committee introduced the American Conifer Society (ACS) to a commemorative pin. Elmer Dustman, a former ACS director, and William N. Valavanis introduced the idea. Valavanis is a twenty-five-year member of ACS, joining one year after the society was started by Joel Springarn. Valavanis is also editor and publisher of *International Bonsai*, a world-class quarterly, and proprietor of the International Bonsai Arboretum in Rochester, New York. Attendees at the 2004 meeting may remember watching Valavanis create a bonsai from a stock plant and also remember visiting his incredible arboretum.

Bonsai societies throughout the world have been making commemorative pins for decades, and some collectors have accumulated collections numbering in the hundreds. Rare pins are sought after and traded, and some have become very valuable. It just seemed time for ACS to join the fun.

Pins are collected for many reasons, according to Valavanis. For example, there is the individual beauty and character of each pin. Many people collect pins from the various conventions they have attended as a fond remembrance of the occasion. Others want a pin from wherever they travel as a way of keeping track of the places they have been. Some collect for the mere challenge. Pin collectors often trade their duplicate pins for ones they don't have. No matter what



the reason, the act of trading is an act of sharing and a great way to meet people. Valavanis recommends that you get two of each pin you want to collect. Keep one for your collection, and have the other for trading or selling. The NE Regional is going to try to make extra pins available of both current and past ACS pins.

Many pins have a great story to go with them. The 2007 ACS pin is an excellent example. While visiting the 36-acre garden of George and Karen Hanford (a featured tour garden for the 2007 NE Regional), we took several pictures of a beautiful weeping spruce. The tree was *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Bruns'. The committee later learned that

this tree was selected as the ACS's 2007 Collectors Conifer of the Year. It was pure serendipity that these two disparate events occurred when they did, and the organizing committee quickly saw a great opportunity. The 2007 ACS NE Regional pin will proudly display an engraved and hand-colored image of the Hanford's 'Pendula Bruns'.

It is incredible that these beautiful pins are actually affordable little mementos for our ACS meetings. You might wonder how it is done. First, the organizing committee chooses a photograph or graphic they wish to display on the pin. This information then goes to a graphics designer. The customer's design is simplified and adapted to be suitable for reproducing in metal and filling in with color. Next, an engraver creates three molds - one for the front design, a second for the exterior pin shape, and a third for the back stamp for the wording on the back. The pins are then stamped, and the post or "finding" is soldered to the back. Each pin is then hand colored using powdered glass, enamel paint, or colored resin. Finally, the pins are "fired" in a kiln to permanently affix the colors to the metal.

Our graphic designer is Harvey B. Carapella. He has been a student of Valavanis for over 30 years. He has used his education and artistic talent in designing fine-quality classical bonsai art as well as bonsai pins. A thorough understanding of both graphic design and bonsai design has made him the foremost bonsai pin designer in the world. He and Valavanis have collaborated on over 200 different pin designs for bonsai organizations, conventions, businesses, artists, and other horticultural events and societies.



Carapella is a recently retired graphic designer from Rochester Institute of Technology.

Valavanis is our producer. He has been producing pins for nearly ten years. He works closely with Carapella with the pin design and its feasibility for manufacturing in China. The company that manufactures the pins is special because it will accept small orders (for example, 200) for fine quality cloisonné pins.

Carapella and Valavanis have produced over 200,000 pins in more than 200 different pin designs. They have designed and manufactured three pins for the ACS NE Regionals: 2004, 2006, and 2007. There was a pin for the ACS National held in the NE Region in 2005. This was a small oval pin of different manufacture. We hope to have extra 2004 and 2006 pins for sale (or auction) at the 2007 NE Regional in Auburn, New York. You may have the opportunity to complete your collection. We have about twenty-six 2004 pins left over. We are trying to track down the over 60 pins that should be left over from the 2006 meet in Hartford. If we don't find them, your 2006 pin will become a very valuable commodity.

Let's hope that the ACS continues to produce an annual commemorative pin for our edification and collection. The NE Region, through its Advisory Com-

mittee, will continue to push for an annual pin. It would be great if each of the other regions, as well as national, could join in. Collecting ACS commemorative pins along with some conifers adds another dimension to your experience at our regional meetings.

I can just hear the auctioneer at a future ACS auction, "What am I bid for this complete collection of ten ACS NE Regional commemorative pins for the years 2004 through 2014? Who will give me \$25? I have \$25. Do I have \$30? I have \$30. Do I have \$35? I still have \$30. C'mon, folks, they cost more than that to make. I have \$35. I have \$40. Do I have \$45? This is your last chance. Forty dollars going once, going twice, sold to bidder number 49 for \$40."



Contact information on pin design and production can be obtained from the 2007 NE Region Organizing Committee's chair, Elmer Dustman ([edustmal@rochester.rr.com](mailto:edustmal@rochester.rr.com)).



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*More than one Scholarship may be awarded.*

**Correction:**

On page 7 of our last issue, the growing details for *Taxodium distichum* 'Cascade Falls' in the United States were incorrectly stated. 'Cascade Falls' holds a U.S. patent in the name of David & Noeline Sampson of Cedar Lodge Nurseries, New Zealand. Stanley & Sons Nursery holds the principal growing license for the U.S. and Larry Stanley has appointed several sub-licensees. The three big ones are Hines, J. Frank Schmidt and Iseli Nursery.



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# Highway Treasures

by Tom Cox & Kimberly Karlin

This old Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*) was found approximately six miles from home. It's an example that shows one does not have to travel far to see a really cool plant. It is located in an old cow pasture that has now been purchased for development. Upon seeing the pine, world-renowned plantsman and ACS life member Don Shadow estimated its age to be at least 150 years old. One can only imagine the number of cattle that have used it for shade. At one time, this pasture was likely planted in cotton. Oftentimes when I drive by, I ponder why this tree was never cut - perhaps the succession of owners recognized its unique beauty.

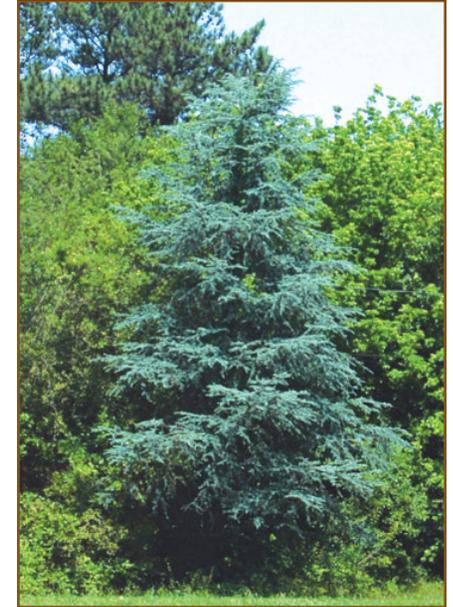


Now we have a new threat, the developer. I have petitioned the local county commission as well as the county arborist to require the developer to save the tree and can only hope it will happen. If the developer's machinery allows, I have arranged for Dennis Dodge to do some grafts this winter.



This second roadside gem was found at the vacation retreat of ACS members Rusty and Dick George in their North Georgia mountain vacation retreat. On a morning walk, I discovered this as-yet-unnamed *Pinus strobus* as a chance seedling. While it is obvious that it will be dwarf, at this stage we have no way of discerning what that means in terms of size. That is much of the fun in this crazy obsession (Addicted Conifer Syndrome) that many of us have.

Here is a Blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca') that Kimberly admires on the roadside near the Karlin's home. There are no houses within 30 yards of the tree, it must have been planted by a bird . . .



## Conifer News – Junipers Losing Ground

by Kimberly Karlin

The BBC News recently described a study performed by Plantlife, a charitable organization in England. The study found great losses of *Juniperus communis* occurring as a result of an elderly tree population no longer able to reproduce. The study, carried out by 250 volunteers and conducted between October 2004 and October 2005, examined 44,000 junipers across Scotland. The results showed that the surviving population lacks a sufficient number of reproductive female plants because many of these trees are between 100 and 200 years old, and as with humans, their reproductive capacity diminishes with age.

Male and female junipers may be widely dispersed. This is significant because the shrub is dioecious, meaning there are both male and female plants, unlike normal trees where the different sexes occur on the same plant. Male juniper plants produce a lot of pollen, so only a few of them are required for berry production. But if there are few viable females to be pollinated and produce berries, reproduction rates fall, and eventually populations drop. In the past, the tree was highly valued for firewood and for making gin, ensuring a constant turnover of plants. But around the turn of the last century, interest in junipers started to wane, and land was no longer managed in a way that encouraged their growth.

The article pointed out that the

plant's continuation in the United Kingdom is important as *Juniperus communis* is one of only three conifers native to the area, the others being yews (*Taxus*) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). While replanting efforts have begun, the seedlings have to face the challenges of grazing by wildlife as well as occasional wildfire.

### Foe of the Fir

A recent story by Arlene Bloetes of the *Free Press* detailed a new and potentially dangerous pest affecting fir trees in Canadian forests. Flame-colored firs are slowly signaling devastation by fir beetles. Much like the pine beetle, it tunnels through the inner bark and infects trees with a fungus that plugs conductive tissue, much like cholesterol plugs arteries in humans. Larvae also eat their way through the soft inner bark and cut off the tree's life flow.

Though not yet at the serious stage, evidence of fir beetle infestation has been growing in a slow, but continual, manner. The article quoted Rick Stock, head of the Forest Health Stewardship department at the 100 Mile District Forestry Office. He said the reason is one we've all heard before: "It's kind of like the mountain pine beetle problem where there hasn't been cold enough weather to kill the bugs."

According to the article, nature's method of control would involve an October dip in temperature to  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$

( $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) for a three-to-four-week period in mid-winter. Forest fires also play an important role in pest control, but human intervention discounts that option. Budget cuts originally caused efforts to be focused on eliminating the mountain pine beetle, but increasing destruction from the fir beetle is requiring attention of its own.

With the dollars that were still available, Stock ran a small-scale program involving removal of infected trees, which he said was quite effective. Also, a new anti-aggregation pheromone known as MCH, not yet approved by the Canadian government but available to him under a research permit, was hung on healthy trees and worked by giving a false signal to flying beetles that the tree was already filled to capacity.

Stock said he saw promising results in small spots with less than ten trees such as in Caribou country, where fir trees account for just 31 percent of the 100 Mile District forest cover. They are generally found in a mixed stand among other species. Stock noted that pine accounts for 55 percent of the total volume, with spruce and balsam taking 9 percent and aspen and others accounting for the remainder.

### Pine Regrowth in the Mountains of Spain

Pilar R. Quiros of the *Costa Del Sol News* recalls a terrifying night in July 2001 when a catastrophic fire raged through the mountain cities of the Montes de Malaga, the Pinares de San Anton, and the Sierra de Mijas. Caused by an overheated car engine, the catastrophic blaze displaced dozens of people as well as wildlife.

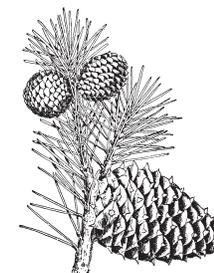
Six years later, some of the steeper slopes are gaining new life at an impressive rate. The local head of Natural Environment Management says the secret lies in the cones from *Pinus halepensis*, which sheds its cones when they dry out. Its cones were dried out because of the fires burning in the surrounding area causing reseeding to occur. Where this natural regrowth is not occurring, artificial reforestation with seeds will have to be carried out.

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## People, Plants and Places

### Journey to New Zealand

Text and photos by Tom Cox

Evelyn and I recently had the pleasure to spend three wonderful weeks touring the North and South Islands of New Zealand. While the intent was to see and experience the beauty and culture of this Pacific gem, no trip of ours is ever devoid of a healthy dose of gardens and garden people. This was no exception.

Before departing, we were fortunate to have made contact with Mr. Graeme Platt who is president of the N.Z. Botanical Research Institute Limited. Graeme

is considered a horticultural icon in New Zealand, especially in the city of Auckland where he resides. He also was the 1994 recipient of the Merit Award, New Zealand's highest award for meritorious service. If there is such a title as unofficial tree person for a country, then Graeme would fit, as well as look, the part. He met us at the Auckland airport, which is on the North Island. Within an hour, we were in a park looking up at some of the largest forms of *Araucaria heterophylla* (Norfolk Island pine) I have ever seen, as well as many other conifers that I only recognized from books.



*Araucaria bidwillii*

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.



Beach where *The Piano* was filmed

Throughout Auckland, we were able to see numerous trees that Graeme has planted over the years, and in one afternoon, my camera battery was exhausted. On day two, we were escorted over the forested Waitakere Ranges where we had the opportunity to photograph kauri (*Agathis australis*) trees in the wild that were more than 185 feet tall. Enormous tree ferns and palms lined the path that led us, at sunset, to a black-sand beach where scenes from the movie *The Piano* were filmed.

Evelyn took a plant break on day three to shop and sightsee with Graeme's lovely wife, Rosemary. This left time for us guys to do non-stop plant talk and hard-core exploration. The highlight of the day was trekking through some of the most unimaginable bush on his rather

large property in the heart of the city to stand in front of the original *Taxodium distichum* var. *distichum* 'Cascade Falls'. Since I have asked Graeme for an article, I will not elaborate.

Graeme has a number of stimulating theories and observations – two of which stood out for me as we continued our journey. The first is the growth habit of ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) trees, which tend to be more horizontal than we see in North America. He attributes this to the high amount of ultraviolet light that is available in New Zealand; hence, it does not need to grow as much in a vertical fashion. The second observation was the counterclockwise twist to the bark of trees in the southern hemisphere and he wondered if in North America, it might be the opposite (clockwise). While I've

not done a great deal of research, plants that I have observed since returning home do twist in a clockwise direction.

After several days of sightseeing on our own, we wound up at the home of long-time ACS members, Noeline and David Sampson. The Sampsons started and ran, for many years, the world famous Cedar Lodge Nursery, now owned and operated by their son, Greg. This is the nursery that propagated *Taxodium distichum* var. *distichum* 'Cascade Falls' after being made aware of it by Graeme Platt. As a side note, they then worked with Larry Stanley (Stanley & Sons Nursery) for its commercial release in the United States.

We spent two fabulous nights in their home. On one night, we were treated to a delicious dinner of slow-roasted mutton and fresh vegetables. I went back for thirds. Outside our bed-

room window was a most beautiful conifer garden that was framed by a huge weeping *Cupressus*. This was definitely a room with a view, tailor-made for conifer lovers.

Cedar Lodge is known as a nursery, but in my mind, it is first and foremost an arboretum that is filled with some of the rarest conifers on earth. This is the only nursery that I know of selling nothing but conifers. A walk through their nursery and extensive plantings is like nothing I've ever experienced. We saw *Araucaria laubenfelsii*; a yellow *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Lemonade'; a golden *Pinus radiata* 'Aurea'; a hybrid juniper, *Juniperus squamata* 'Meyeri' X *recurva* var. *coxii*; and a most beautiful fastigiate Austrian black pine, *Pinus nigra* var. *pyramidata* 'Pinnacle'. It was also fascinating to see *Thujopsis* being used as a windscreen.

On our last day with the Sampsons,



Cedar Lodge



David Sampson at Cedar Lodge

we visited some of their remote properties. Despite trekking in a cold rain, I found myself wanting for more as we came upon numerous forms of *Cryptomeria*, rare pines and at least 15 different well-grown species of *Picea*. After a leisurely stroll on our own in their magnificent Christmas shop named Santa's Choice, the four of us reviewed our whirlwind visit over an excellent meal at a local restaurant. Two days was not enough at this magical place.

From a plant perspective, New Zealand is a land of contradiction. For instance, it enjoys some of the best growing conditions on earth, but throughout our travels, I don't recall seeing any extensive home landscaping. Also, despite the fact that no pines are native to the

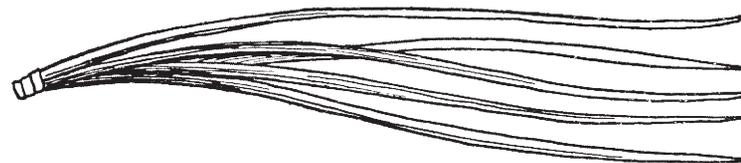
southern hemisphere, *Pinus radiata* (Monterey pine) is widely planted as both an ornamental and a cash crop. The other common plant is Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*). Both were supposedly brought to New Zealand from California during the New Zealand gold rush. Sadly, as the Sampsons pointed out, conifers are not popular with the average homeowner. In contrast, practically every town of any size has a botanical garden and all are well maintained. Two of the finest examples were in the cities of Christchurch and Dunedin where many beautiful conifers are found. In both locations, numerous trees in excess of 100 years old are common.

If you go to New Zealand to see its native conifers, you will find that they

vary widely in occurrence and ease of access. It is easy to find examples of the largest and oldest forest trees that are growing in a native habitat. On the North Island, kauri (*Agathis australis*) is common. Other observed native conifers include *Halocarpus bidwillii*, *Prumnopitys ferrugineus*, *Lepidothamnus intermedius*, *Podocarpus totara*, *Podocarpus nivalis*, *Podocarpus hallii*, and *Dacrydium cupressinum*.

Due to the common language, friendly people, ease of travel, and spectacular beauty, I highly recommend New Zealand as a travel destination. This, together with the abundance of unique flora, makes it a great destination for an organized ACS international trip.

*About the author:* Tom Cox is President of the American Conifer Society. He and Evelyn live in Canton, Georgia, where they own a private arboretum that is open by appointment to ACS members.



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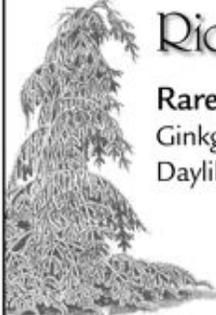
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### Southeastern Region

#### Southeast Meeting Comes to Louisville

The beautiful city of Louisville, Kentucky, will play host to the Southeast Regional meeting, scheduled for **September 21–22**. The meeting's program promises something for everyone with beautiful gardens and outstanding speakers.

In store for attendees is a visit to the fabulous Yew Dell Gardens ([www.yewdellgardens.org](http://www.yewdellgardens.org)). Yew Dell is the former home and garden of the late Theodore Klein, a legendary nurseryman. Beautiful themed gardens throughout the 33-acre property contain an enormous collection of rare trees and shrubs. Fantastic conifers, witches' broom sugar maples, and a European beech collection (which the late J.C. Raulston called one of the best) are but a few of the wonders of this stunning garden. Yew Dell's director, nationally renowned horticulturalist Dr. Paul Cappiello, will provide a personalized tour of the gardens.

Also on tap is a visit to the private garden of ACS members Barbara Wilson and Harry Casey. This husband and wife team has assembled a terrific garden on their 3-acre property with conifers, perennials, and a water feature that is sure to inspire. Our third stop is a truly exceptional nursery, Hidden Hill Nursery and Sculpture Garden ([www.hiddenhillnursery.com](http://www.hiddenhillnursery.com)). Hidden Hill's eight acres include the nursery, plus a garden full of rare and wonderful

plants and unique sculptures. At this delightful nursery, located in a beautiful country setting, folks are sure to have a ball.

Of course, the meeting also promises great food, great friends, and the ever-popular plant auction that folks have come to expect from our fair region. Mark Weathington, our keynote speaker and Director of Horticulture for Norfolk Botanical Garden, will inform and entertain us with his wealth of experience and knowledge.

Attendees will want to extend their stay for on-your-own visits, as Louisville is rich in many other horticultural gems. Easily accessible from our host hotel, the Holiday Inn Hurstbourne, are Bernheim Arboretum, Cave Hill Cemetery, and Whitehall, plus many other sites of interest.

Mark your calendar for a truly exciting program this September!

*Duane Ridenour*  
*Southeast Region Vice President*

#### New Southeast Region Director



Scott Burrell has been elected to the ACS Board of Directors from the Southeast Region. Scott is the Director of Horticulture for the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond (<http://www.vahistorical.org>). He has a keen eye for conifers and has included some of the most beautiful specimens in the Virginia Historical Society's gardens. Scott is currently establishing a

larger dwarf collection on the grounds and has been diligent in exploring options and expanding the choices he thinks may work in his area. In his position at the Virginia Historical Society, Scott has become very familiar with nonprofit organizations and with volunteer boards, which enables him to immediately contribute to the board's work. We in the Southeast Region appreciate his willingness to serve and know he will be a real asset to the ACS Board of Directors.

*Flo Chaffin*  
*Southeast Region President*

#### Maud Henne: Conifers in the Garden

Use the link below to read an online article about Maud Henne's garden. In addition to being a conifer lover and collector with a fantastic garden, Maud is quite a photographer. You can see some of her fantastic photos there. The ACS Web site is listed in the article as an information source for conifers. Thank you, Maud!

<http://www.wcve.org/vhg/may2007.html>

### Northeast Region

#### Gerald Kral – Gardening Guru

When Lisa Hutchurson, staff writer for the Rochester, New York, *Democrat and Chronicle*, wanted to know what gardeners should do when rainfall is lacking, she turned to ACS Board Director Gerald Kral. Gerald, also a Master Gardener, offered some practical tips for gardeners, which were published on the Web site.

The ACS Northeast Regional meeting will be held **September 14-16**. See [www.conifersociety.org](http://www.conifersociety.org) for details.

### Central Region

The garden of ACS members Terri and Jay Park in Carmel, Indiana, was recently presented with the "Best Use of Companion Plants and Specimens (non-hosta) Garden Award" at the 2007 Hosta Convention in Indianapolis. This just proves that conifers stand out in any crowd. The Park garden is open to ACS members by appointment.

The recent Central Region annual meeting was a blast. These photos were taken by ACS member Jim Kelley from the Peterson garden.



# Nominations Sought for 2008 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, 2007.

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

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

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

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

This award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the 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.

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:

Don Howse

41370 SE Thomas Road

Sandy, OR 97055

Phone/FAX: 503 668-5834

Email: don@porterhowse.com

# ANNOUNCING

## 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.*

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