

Conifer Quarterly

Vol. 22 No. 1

Winter 2005





Those of us who are tempted to mope during the dark days of winter might take a lesson from this cheery fellow!

Pinus contorta 'Chief Joseph' was photographed by Gary Shuldt, who was selected as the winner of our photo contest.

Turn to the center of this issue to see more gold conifers in full color.

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Cover photo: This *Thuja occidentalis* 'Columbia' growing in Bill Barger's garden in Wadsworth, Ohio, was a gift from Pete Girard. It was only 16 inches (40 cm) tall eight years ago.

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Winter 2005
Volume 22, No. 1

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You are invited to join our Society. Please address membership and other inquires to the Conifer Society National Office, P.O. Box 3422, Crofton, MD 21114-0422. Membership: US \$30 (basic), \$30 (institutional) \$50 (sustaining), \$100 (corporate/business) and \$130 (patron). If you are moving, please notify the National Office 4 weeks in advance.

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

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Volunteer to serve on the Board

Our yearly Board of Directors election has a problem. Frequently, we have had only three candidates for the three open board positions, which makes the election an expensive and a wasteful process since the results are known ahead of time. If we were to save the money (\$1500) and simply appoint three members, we would violate the by-laws and certainly irritate the membership.

The only solution is to have more volunteers from the membership willing to run for office. Dennis Groh, as chairman of the nominating committee, will be calling. I urge you to consider serving on the board. Better yet, call or e-mail Dennis or myself and volunteer to be a candidate.

If you happen to lose in the election, it is not personal and we hope you will run a second or third time. You will find that once you do run, other members will subsequently recognize you and your base will grow.

We will do our best to make your experience worthwhile. We have and have had excellent board members, but everyone needs to take their turn.

A successful year in our Regions

The Northeast Region had a terrific September meeting in Rochester, NY. Everyone who attended raved about the effort put forth by Elmer Dustman and his crew of volunteers. Suzanne Mahoney has agreed to edit and produce the region's newly conceived newsletter, "Coniferous Contemplations."

The Southeast Region had their

most successful meeting ever in Raleigh, NC, thanks to a terrific effort by Maude Henne, Flo Chaffin, Mike Balough and Tom Cox, along with a host of volunteers. We would also like to thank Kimberly Karlin who has agreed to create a newsletter for the Southeast Region.

The Western Region has been very busy since the National meeting, as they held a regular scheduled regional meeting in Olympia, Washington, in addition to greeting the Dutch Conifer Society. Don Howse and crew performed their usual magic in the Northwest this year.

All reports are that the auctions this year ran exceptionally well thanks to the format and instructions so precisely outlined by Jim and Ellen Kelley.

Behind the scenes

The Society's by-laws have not been officially updated since their initial writing in 1983. The Board has created a second document called Policies of the Board, which has served us well for several years. However, a significant revision is in order, by which the Policies of the Board are, at least in part, incorporated into the by-laws. John Martin has agreed to work on this project during the next few months. John and the Board would appreciate assistance from anyone who has experience in the area of by-laws for non-profit organizations.

The board continues to monitor the new rules and regulations concerning charitable organizations. It is apparent from our research that, as an organization, we can only solicit from Society

members. By limiting our solicitations in such a manner, we qualify for an exemption from the need to register in most states.

We have had some encouraging responses to our plea for more regional rendezvous. Let's keep that momentum going in 2005. The regional officers should be ready to assist anyone interested in holding a rendezvous.

Anne Brennan has expanded this issue of the *Conifer Quarterly* by adding *eight full color pages*. We hope to do this more often.

Finally, congratulations to Gary Schuldt – our first photo contest winner!

Thanks,



I've heard rumors that Conifer Society members are some of the best plant photographers, and this issue confirms that. I received many more entries for our first photo contest than I had room to include. You can see them on this issue's covers, on pages 12-24, and in the special eight-page color section in the center of this *Quarterly*.

The winning photo of a snow-covered *Pinus contorta* 'Chief Joseph' appears on the inside front cover. Congratulations to new member **Gary Schudt** of Olympia, Washington, who wins a free year of Conifer Society membership!

In this issue

Gold and variegated conifers try their best to chase away the winter doldrums in this issue. After you check out the photos sent in by our members, read

about some of the causes of yellow coloration beginning on page 14. Once you understand the importance of the right amount of sunlight in producing the best combination of coloration and growth, you might just grab that spade and move a few plants.

Don Howse returns to the pages of the *Quarterly* this issue with another of his popular travelogues. This time, he leads us through the Sierra Nevada springtime with wonderful pictures and poetic prose. Perhaps his stories will bring back memories of your own adventures – we'd love to read about your experiences in our upcoming Spring issue! (See sidebar at right for more information.)

Several new conifer cultivars were added to the International Conifer Register in 2004, as described on pages 10-13. Have you considered applying to

register a conifer cultivar that you've found or developed – a plant that has unique and distinctive characteristics? The article includes instructions for obtaining a registration form by mail or online.

Our Regions kept up their momentum through the latter part of 2004, and they report on their activities beginning on page 40.

Since becoming Editor in late 2002, I've encountered many members who have been unaware of the Society's trade name change in 2002. For promotional purposes and in publications, the Society has used the trade name The Conifer Society rather than the American Conifer Society since that time. The legal name of the organization, however, remains the American Conifer Society. The details and implications of this change are outlined by our national office manager on page 38-39. As always, the Board of Directors welcomes any comments or questions from the membership on this and other topics.

Before we know it, Spring will induce that fresh new flush of growth from our winter-weary conifers. As any gardener knows, winter is a great time to plan. I hope that this issue's photos of gold and variegated conifers inspire some new additions to your evolving gardens.

Best wishes for a rewarding 2005!

Anne

The Spring issue will feature your travel stories

"Remember when we saw ...?"

The Spring 2005 Conifer Quarterly will feature your conifer-related travel tales. We'd love to hear about your most unusual, surprising or hilarious memory from a Conifer Society meeting, vacation, or drive along that tree-lined highway.

Plan now to send your description, short article and/or photo to the Editor by February 10th.

Companion plants to highlight Summer issue

In July, we'll explore the age-old question, "Who is conifers' best friend?"

Do hostas hang out with your hemlocks? Does *Campanula* keep your *Chamaecyparis* company? Send us a picture and inspire our readers to try a new garden combination. Submissions are due by May 10th.

Publication Dates

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

Submit articles/photos to:

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 145 Cedar St., Jenkintown, PA 19046 • PH (215) 376-0231
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I am writing in response to the fellow in the Czech Republic who requested good photos of *Abies lasiocarpa* 'Duflon' (Letter to the Editor, Vol. 21, No. 2 [Spring 2004], p. 41). Not only do I have some good slides of the plant growing in gardens, but also I was presented by Bitá and Alton Duflon with a copy of their slide of the original plant taken in 1975, when the plant was 21 years old. Further, I have a slide of the plant propagated by Lohbrunner of Victoria, BC, taken in 1984 when that plant was 30 years old.

An interesting side note – the story



The original plant at 21 years of age, photographed in 1975 by Alton Duflon.



Ed Lohbrunner's 30-year-old plant in Victoria, BC, in 1984. Photo by Alton Duflon.

in the Fall 1985 *Bulletin* (see sidebar at right), to which Mr. Kazbal referred in his letter, is incorrect in that the bit about the plant being split "Solomon fashion" is a fable. This story has been spread about like bad gossip. It is true that the original plant died when it was dug up a second time to move it to a bonsai pot, but there was no attempt made to divide the plant.

The original plant was found in the mid-1950's near Lake Cushman, on the Olympic peninsula of Washington State, where the Duflons of Seattle were hiking. It must have been a miniature seedling if they dug it up as reported. I understand that Lohbrunner heard of the plant and traveled to Seattle to get cuttings, which he successfully propagated.

I have found that *A. lasiocarpa* 'Duflon' can be propagated by either rooted cuttings or grafting; either method requires about 10 years to develop a plant 4 inches (10 cm) in diameter.

Don Howse
Sandy, Oregon



'Duflon' in Rex Murfitt's garden, Victoria, BC, in May 2001. Photo by Don Howse.

Following is an excerpt from the Fall 1985 American Conifer Society *Bulletin* that is mentioned at left:

"*Abies lasiocarpa* 'Duflon' is an incredibly charming and rare plant. It is said that the original plant, discovered in the wild by two women, became the subject of a dispute over ownership, which was finally solved, Solomon-like, by splitting the plant vertically in two. It died, of course, but fortunately Lohbrunner had made viable propagations."



'Duflon' in a pot in Rex Murfitt's garden.



Witches' broom on 'Duflon,' in Al Smith's garden, Victoria, BC, in May 2001. Photo by Don Howse.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

We welcome your contribution!

Check our Website at www.conifersociety.org and click on "Conifer Quarterly" for complete guidelines, or contact the Editor.

The Conifer Society may reprint or adapt for future use materials submitted for publication. As the contributor, you retain the right to use your work in any other publications. Please contact the Editor for details.

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Another Gardener Converts to Conifers

by Kent Burgess

On a beautiful autumn afternoon, I looked out at the garden and sat amazed. When we purchased this home seven years ago, zero landscaping had been done. At that time, I had rather modest ideas for the backyard – I would keep most of it as lawn where our three girls could play and maybe add a couple trees for some shade.

About three years before that, I became interested in shade gardening while living in an old and historic neighborhood in St. Louis, Missouri. Based on that experience, I began to plan a shade garden in the small area between my new home and the garage.

Before long, things changed, and changed drastically. I am about to mention two people that most of you know very well. And I must again thank them for their part in all of this.

While watching an episode of “The Victory Garden” filmed at Rich’s Foxwillow Pines in Woodstock, Illinois, my interests changed, to say the least. I was someone who had said I would never take up precious space in my garden with a “boring, needled evergreen.” But as I watched Rich Eyre on television, I sat in amazement while he showed some of the most unusual – some might even say

bizarre – trees. I immediately grabbed the map to see where Woodstock was located. I was thrilled to discover that it was about 50 miles from my mother’s home, and I had a trip planned for there the very next weekend.

I found the nursery’s phone number by calling the Chamber of Commerce in Woodstock, and then I made the call that changed everything. I talked to

Susan Eyre that day, the other half of the duo. Susan was so very kind and helpful and said I must surely make the trip and they would be looking forward to meeting me.

I must also mention at this time how eager other conifer experts I have met since that day have been in sharing information. A big thank you to Chub Harper, Don Howse, Larry Stanley and Charlene Harris. Charlene’s slide show made my first garden club presentation



All photos by Kent Burgess

much easier once I began speaking to groups about conifer gardening.

Now back to my story. I cannot put into words the excitement I felt seeing Rich and Susan’s nursery for the first time. Being the beginning of winter, it



would be several long, cold months before I returned in the spring to purchase my first new conifers.

Today, seven years later, I have over 200 different conifer cultivars, a large collection of Japanese maples and yes, a good many perennials including some shade plants that made the trip from the city to our new suburban home.

The joy, peace, and rest I find in my garden is truly special to me, my wife and our three lovely girls. This hobby has also evolved into a garden design business, and I find myself selling conifers and Japanese maples out of the stock I keep on hand for design jobs. And last but not least, my garden has brought the opportunity to speak before garden clubs about these wonderful and worthy plants. ▲

About the author: Kent Burgess lives in St. Louis, Missouri, with his wife Julie and their three girls, Amie, Ellie, and Samantha.

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Additions to the International Conifer Register - 2004

by Sabina G. Knees, RHS International Conifer Registrar

Notes on the entries

As in previous years the cultivars are listed in alphabetical order by genus. The species to which the cultivar is assigned is given first (where known) followed by brief details of the cultivar's origins and characteristics, as given by the registrant on the Registration Form. An explanation of the origin of the name may follow if it is not apparent elsewhere. The Originator (O), Nominant or name-giver (N), Introducer (I) and Registrant (REG) are then listed in order

with the appropriate year, if not already given, together with the relevant personal addresses, where known.

Registration Form

The form was recently redesigned by my predecessor, Piers Trehane. It includes a set of guidance notes. Forms can be obtained from the Regional Registrar, Susan F. Martin, US National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue NE, Washington DC 20002 or from the American Conifer Society, P.O. Box



Photo courtesy of The Dawes Arboretum

Pinus virginiana 'Bernie.'

3422, Crofton, MD 21114. Applicants from outside the USA and Canada should write to Sabina Knees, RHS International Conifer Registrar, 8a Granton Road, Edinburgh, EH5 3QH, Scotland, UK. Information can also be obtained from the Royal Horticultural Society's Registration Web page: www.rhs.org.uk/science/mn_registration.asp.

Further information on cultivar registration

Full details of the aims and objectives of cultivar registration through the worldwide system of International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRAs), along with guidance on how to form names in accord with the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP), may be found on the web pages of the International Society for Horticultural Science: www.ishs.org/sci/icra.htm.

GINKGO 'Jehoshaphat'

G. biloba cv. Ortet a witches' broom. Extremely dwarf plant, forming a short, broom-like specimen that remains stable over several years. Overall shape globose to bun-shaped with little lateral branching, consisting instead of shortened, spur-like appendages. Height 55 cm (22 in) and width 22 cm (9 in) after eight years. Estimated growth rate 6-7 cm (< 3 in) per year. Scions of this broom were originally sent to the Arboretum from Spring Grove Cemetery & Arboretum as an unnamed but numbered broom. At the time the broom was numbered eighty six. The name, 'Jehoshaphat,' refers to a character in Par

Lagerkvist's book, *The Dwarf*. O (1995) Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum, 4521 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45232-1954, USA. N (2003), I & REG (2004) Richard A. Larson, Propagator, on behalf of The Dawes Arboretum, 7770 Jacksontown Road SE, Newark, Ohio 43056-9380, USA.

PINUS 'Bernie'

P. virginiana cv. Ortet a witches' broom selected from native plantings of *P. virginiana* at Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in 1996. A tight, mound-forming dwarf possessing excellent winter green foliage, not generally characteristic of this species. Bun-shaped, somewhat tiered in habit, spreading wider than tall. Needles fine dark to medium green throughout the



Photo courtesy of The Dawes Arboretum

Ginkgo biloba 'Jehoshaphat'

Below and right: *Thuja* x 'Green Giant'



Photos courtesy of US National Arboretum

year, older needles twisted. Height 51 cm (20 in), and 78 cm (31 in) wide after 5 years; 1.28 m (50 in) tall and 2.57 (100 in) m wide after eight years. Estimated growth rates: height 12 cm (7 in) per year, width 39 cm (15 in) per year. Propagation is considered by the originator to be moderately difficult but grafts on *P. sylvestris* appear stable and compatible, however, most cultivated selections of *P. virginiana* either grow too slowly or resist propagation and often discolor in winter. O, N, I & REG (2004) Richard A. Larson, Propagator, The Dawes Arboretum, 7770 Jacksontown Road SE, Newark, Ohio 43056-9380, USA.

'Rickel'

P. sylvestris cv. Ortet selected from a grove of 17,000 trees planted in 1972 at Viewcrest Nursery, Battle Ground, Washington. Intermediate growth upright, overall shape pyramidal to conical

with ascending branches. Branch structure open, allowing foliage to be retained on inner stems and branches. Height 41 in. (104 cm) and width 28 in. (71 cm) after 6 years; 19 feet (6 m) tall and 9.5 feet (3 m) wide after 12 years. Estimated growth rate 7 in. (18 cm) per year. Plant gunmetal blue with flaking orange bark, Older needles longer than younger needles, giving the branches a foxtail appearance. Seven-year-old trees retain older needles well and have the appearance of a bristle cone pine. According to the originator, mature plants work well in the smaller landscape while smaller plants are fine for containers. O, N, I (1996) & REG (2004) Dan Rickel, Rickel's Tree Farm, PO Box 598, Estacada, Oregon 97023, USA. STANDARD: Herbarium specimen at U.S. National Arboretum, Washington DC.

**THUJA
'Green Giant'**

T. standishii x *T. plicata* cv. Ortet a seedling from Mr. D.T. Poulsen, Kvistgaard, Denmark in 1967. Vigorously growing, tightly pyramidal to columnar, evergreen, eventually to 45 feet (14 m), with a 9-foot (2.7-m) spread at maturity. Estimated growth rate: 3 feet (1 m) per year when young. Foliage bright green, glossy. Tolerates a wide range of growing conditions. Considered to be an excellent alternative to X *Cupressocyparis leylandii*. It is very fast-growing and maintains a good green colour. It can be used for hedging, screens or for specimen plantings. Received the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Gold Medal Plant Award in 1998. O (1996) Dr Kim Tripp, New York Botanic Garden, Bronx, NY 10458 and Susan Martin, US National Arboretum, 3501 New York Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002. I (1967). N (1996) Don Shaddow, Shaddow Nursery, 254 Shaddow Nursery Road, Winchester, Tennessee 37398. The name was first published in the *American Conifer Society Bulletin* 14(4):153-155 (1997) and subsequently in *American Nurseryman* November 15:86 (1998). STANDARD: Herbarium specimen at U.S. National Arboretum, Washington DC. ▲

Conifer Society Slide Sets Available to Members for Local Presentations



Would you like to talk to your garden club or social organization about gardening with conifers?

Two slide sets featuring attractive plant combinations and design ideas are available to Conifer Society members. Many of the images come from the collection of Charlene Harris.

Contact coordinator Byron Richards to borrow the slides:

Byron Richards
Phone: (828) 696-0801

LEARN GRAFTING FROM AN EXPERT

George Okken to hold seminar on February 12, 2005

Spend a few hours in Pompton Plains, NJ, learning George's approach to grafting. Cost to cover materials and refreshments is \$30 per person. Contact Stanley Eyre for information: (203) 266-7711 or sbeyre@earthlink.net.

In case of bad weather on Feb. 12, the event will be held on Feb. 19.

Gold Conifers Light Up the Garden

Adapted from an article by Clark D. West

Editor's note: This text is taken from the article "Yellow Conifers" that appeared in the *American Conifer Society Bulletin*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1995). However, the accompanying photos on pages 14-22 were submitted by Conifer Society members for this issue.

One of the clues that you are viewing the yard or garden of a dwarf conifer collector is to see yellow. The conifer enthusiast's yard often has little grass and at least one big, bold yellow conifer.

There is no argument that yellow plants call attention to themselves and their surroundings. This author considers them attractive, though others disagree, saying the color reminds them of a sickly plant.

In varieties that are yellow while healthy, what causes the golden color?

Why are they yellow?

The green color of most plants is caused by the presence of chlorophyll, produced in structures in the cells known as chloroplasts. Chlorophyll is responsible for converting water and carbon dioxide into "food" for the plant, in the presence of sunlight.

Yellow or yellow-variegated plants have a relative lack of chloroplasts, and some may grow at a rate only one quarter that of their green counterparts. Some appear to be solid yellow and, considering how important chlorophyll is in the production of starches for the plant's energy needs, one wonders how they grow at all. Is there a yellow form of chlorophyll, less efficient perhaps than the green, or is there actually some chlorophyll present, allowing just

enough starch production for the plant to grow slowly? In the complete absence of chlorophyll, would the foliage be white?

It is well known that many yellow forms can produce abundant chlorophyll when taken out of the sun. Many turn

Yellow or yellow-variegated plants have a relative lack of chloroplasts

green in the shade, and being in a shady location for a few years can result in a considerable growth spurt, according to Tom Dilatush. Yellow forms that turn green in the shade are sensitive to bright light, which inhibits their production of chlorophyll. He has noted that yellow forms may grow the slowest when planted on a reflective surface such as stone mulch. The growth that they manage on a non-reflective surface depends on chlorophyll produced on the underside, or shady side, of the leaves, and when this shade no longer exists due to a reflective surface, their growth is even slower. It follows that in some of these plants, chlorophyll in shaded foliage or on its north side is its only growth engine. Examples of plants that are light



Bill Barger

Reader
Recommendations

Picea pungens 'Spring Ghost'

Below: *Pinus densiflora*
'Oculus-draconis'



Fletcher Spillman

sensitive in this way are solid yellow *Thuja* (arborvitae), *Chamaecyparis* (falsecypress) and *Tsuga* (hemlock). However, not all yellow conifers behave this way.

The yellow color in some conifers has a different basis and is more like that

If the outer cells of a shoot apex are yellow, the leaf will have a yellow margin

in variegated herbaceous plants. In these plants, the pattern of variegation depends on the arrangement of cells that can or cannot make chlorophyll in the shoot apex – the growing tip of a shoot. If the outer cells of a shoot apex are yellow, the leaf will have a yellow margin, as in some *Hosta*. This arrangement of cells is known as a **periclinal chimera** (*periclinal* means surrounding, and *chimera* means tissue containing cells with two or more genotypes, or genetic compositions). In contrast to these chimeras that produce a marginal leaf pattern, there can be segmental variega-

tion, as in the needles of *Pinus densiflora* ‘Oculus-draconis’. (Editor’s note: see photos of this cultivar on page 15 and page C1 of the color section.) This is the result of each of the several layers of a shoot apex having both yellow and normal cells. This is called a **sectoral chimera** and it produces a patterned variegation.

The seemingly random variegation found in some *Chamaecyparis* and *Juniperus horizontalis* ‘Variegata,’ is the result of a condition known as “ever sporting.” In the growing shoot, the cells are unstable with respect to chlorophyll production, and on parts of the leaf, seemingly at random, non-chlorophyll producing cells proliferate more rapidly and overgrow the green. In contrast to light-sensitive *Thuja*, *Chamaecyparis* and *Tsuga* described earlier, the yellow color produced by a chimera or “ever sporting” variety is present regardless of sun exposure. Thus, in shade the variegation persists but the plant may not be as brilliantly colored and may grow more slowly.

If you like conifers with yellow foliage, there are many to choose from.

Reader Recommendations



Bill Barger

Pinus parviflora ‘Ogon-janome’

Gingko biloba ‘Variegata’



Bill Barger

They can be eye-catching without being brassy, and because they often grow more slowly than their green counterparts, they tend to stay put and not crowd the garden. Most conifer species have variants which are yellow at least part of the year. Their beauty and popularity becomes obvious to anyone leafing through the book *Conifers: The Illustrated Encyclopedia* by van Gelderen and van Hoey Smith.

This article is by no means an exhaustive compilation of yellow conifers, but rather, will provide a brief overview of some noteworthy yellow conifers from a few major plant families.

Chamaecyparis (falsecypress)

One of the most noteworthy species with yellow variants is *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*. One has only to travel to England to be impressed with these cultivars. Many climates in the United States, including mine, are unfriendly toward this species, so I will only say that I have grown *C. lawsoniana* ‘Golden Showers’ (Lawson falsecypress) successfully. It has yellow variegated foliage and relatively compact growth, and it remains yellow well into the winter (as compared to *Thuja occidentalis* and *T. orientalis* that become a dull copper bronze).

Another species, *Chamaecyparis obtusa* (Hinoki falsecypress), offers some attractive cultivars. One of the most attractive of all yellow conifers is *C. o.* ‘Nana Aurea,’ which is said to be

Top: *Pinus contorta* ‘Taylor’s Sunburst’

Chamaecyparis pisifera ‘Golden Mop’ used in a formal garden setting.



Charlene Harris



Charlene Harris

Reader recommendations



Bill Barger

Left and below: *Pinus densiflora* ‘Golden Ghost’



Bill Barger

more compact than *C. obtusa* 'Nana Lutea' and is beautiful for both its color and its texture. In full sun, it will display more yellow color but it may burn in the winter. Another cultivar, *C. o.* 'Crippsii,' becomes almost tree-like, but in the right spot it is a dream tree for the lover of yellow conifers. It may require mild trimming to make it more dense, and it looks most healthy in a location that receives no more than a half day of sun.

Chamaecyparis pisifera (Sawara falsecypress) also offers a number of yellow members, most notably 'Filifera Aurea' and the dwarf 'Golden Mop.' 'Filifera Aurea' stands out because its foliage is threadlike and thick, eventually producing a dense yellow plant 12 to 15 feet tall. If you want to distinguish

your house from others on the street, plant one of these in your front yard and wait ten years. Another available cultivar is *C. pisifera* 'Plumosa Rogersii.' It has some green coloration and, probably for that reason, remains healthy in full sun. It is compact and grows slowly to about three feet.

Abies (fir)

Though rarely seen, there are a number of yellow or golden firs. There is at least one yellow form of *A. koreana* (Korean fir), one of *A. pinsapo* (Spanish fir), and two of *A. concolor* (white or silver fir). One that is becoming popular is *A. nordmanniana* 'Golden Spreader' (Nordmann fir) which is often planted in rock gardens. Specimens in England have

eventually become quite large even though some books say it does not exceed two feet in any dimension. It can develop a vertical leader, which should be cut out unless you want a large tree. Its yellow color is brightest in winter; in full summer sun the leaves are a less attractive, light golden yellow. Plant in a location away from midday sun to prevent burning.

Pinus (pine)

There are many pines that have yellow foliage all or part of the year. Well known is the dragon's eye pine, *Pinus densiflora* 'Oculus-draconis.' (Editor's note: See photos on pages 15 and C1.) It does not appear to be adversely affected by full sun. A pine similar in appearance is *P.*

wallichiana 'Zebrina' (Himalayan pine).

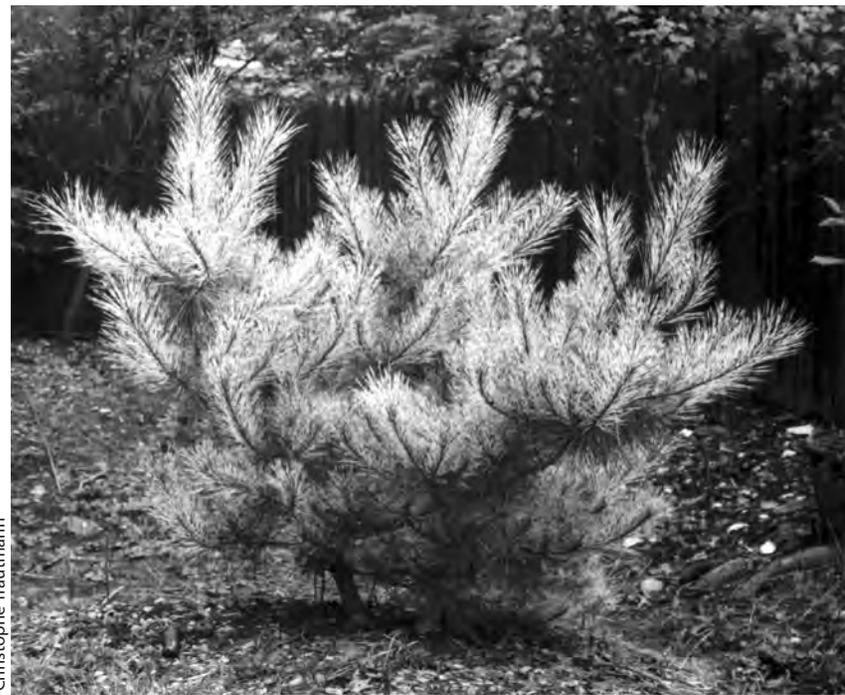
The needles of several pines develop a yellow cast in the winter, giving the impression of ill health to those not "in the know." Warm weather replenishes the chloroplasts and the plant looks healthy again. There are also, however, cultivars whose yellow winter coloration is striking and worth noting.

P. sylvestris 'Aurea' (Scots pine) has bright foliage in the winter but reverts to the green of an ordinary *P. sylvestris* in the summer. *P. strobus* 'Winter Gold' (Eastern white pine) has the same characteristic. A plant that is becoming more popular is *P. virginiana* 'Wate's Golden' (Virginia pine) whose glowing winter color more than makes up for the pedestrian appearance of the species. Be sure



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Pinus parviflora 'Fukai'



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Pinus densiflora 'Burke's Variegated'

that it gets full sun all summer or it will not perform in the winter.

Two *P. mugo* (Mugo pines) that brighten up in the winter are 'Ophir' and 'Winter Gold.' The latter differs in that it is yellow in all seasons but becomes more golden in the winter.

Thuja (arborvitae)

Yellow arborvitae cultivars from the species *T. orientalis* (Oriental arborvitae) and *T. occidentalis* (American arborvitae) are relatively easy to grow, but they do not seem to be as popular among conifer collectors as other yellow conifers. *T. occidentalis* 'Sunkist' and 'Pumila Sudworth' are the standby yellows that were developed in the 1960s. An older but inferior cultivar in terms of its color is *T. occidentalis* 'Lutea.' Both 'Sunkist' and 'Pumila Sudworth' develop an orange yellow color in early winter and later turn bronze.

The cultivars *T. occidentalis* 'Wareana Lutescens' and 'Watonong Gold' display yellow winter color without the orange overtones.

In exposed locations during cold winters, some foliage of *T. orientalis* 'Aurea Nana' will die out, leaving an ugly scar. However, in locations where this is not a problem, the cultivar can grow into perfect, greenish-yellow columns and can be propagated rather easily from seed.

This variegated shoot on an Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) may represent the birth of a new golden cultivar.

A number of dwarf yellow forms of *T. plicata* should be considered as well. 'Stoneham Gold' is upright with deep yellow new shoots that stand out against the older green foliage. 'Cuprea' is a low, spreading shrub that is more of a golden bronze, and 'Rogersii' is similar but with more congested foliage and a tendency to produce upright shoots that should be pruned out.

Taxus (yew)

Yellow forms of *Taxus* are rarely seen in the United States but are common in England. *T. baccata* 'Standishii' (English yew) is probably the best known and certainly the most yellow. It is very slow growing. A variegated version of the old Irish Yew, *T. baccata* 'Fastigiata Aureomarginata' displays yellow mar-



Christophe Trautmann

gins on leaves less than one year old.

Several spreading forms of *T. baccata* have yellow foliage. 'Adpressa Aurea' has yellow young shoots that later turn green. For year-round gold color, plant 'Semperaurea,' whose needles are reported to retain their gold color for two years.

Of the yellow Japanese yews, *T. cuspidata* 'Aurescens' is the most common, though it is less striking than *T. baccata* 'Semperaurea.' For reasons that are not yet clear, there are no yellow forms of *Taxus x media*.

Tsuga (hemlock)

The most common, overall yellow hemlock is *T. canadensis* 'Everitt Golden' (Eastern or Canadian hemlock). Grown in the shade, it is a stiff, coarse-textured, green dwarf hemlock, but grown in the sun it becomes yellow in the spring and develops greenish overtones in the summer. Two other cultivars that thrive in the sun are *T. c.* 'Golden Splendor,' which has light lime green growth in the spring and later turns fully yellow, and 'New Gold,' which pushes yellow in the spring but later turns dark green. Both are large trees but grow more slowly than the species.

A number of hemlocks display white growing tips that give the plants an overall whitish color. Young plants of the well-known *T. c.* 'Gentsch White' are usually sheared to increase the number of white growing tips, but left to its own it will form a perfect dwarf replica of a species hemlock, except with white tips.

In summary, yellow conifers add beauty and interest to a plant collection, but consider following a few rules of thumb. Don't include too many yellow plants, because they look better against a green background than a yellow background. Also, work to find the right amount of shade for those plants that require it for best yellow coloration; with the right amount of light, they will not look washed out (from too much shade) but will be moderately vigorous (with enough shade to produce some green foliage for adequate photosynthesis). Of course, this admonition to avoid excess sun does not apply to those plants that require sun to be yellow. These include *Pinus densiflora* 'Oculus-draconis' and the pines that are yellow only in the winter, such as *P. sylvestris* 'Aurea' and *P. virginiana* 'Wate's Golden.'

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About the author: Dr. West resides on about an acre in Harrison, Ohio, a short distance west of Cincinnati. He has progressed over the years from growing roses to an interest in rock gardens to collecting conifers and, finally, propagating them. He is a long-standing member of the Conifer Society.

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Yellow Conifers from Seed?

Each year, the Conifer Society's seed exchange gives us a chance to obtain that rare little jewel of a plant, if we put forth the effort. My wife and I have several named varieties of *Chamaecyparis obtusa* growing in our front yard, one being *C. o.* 'Lutea', which has produced seeds for the last few years. I have sent most of the seeds to the seed exchange because I don't have the space to germinate all of it.

Evaluating the seedlings that come up each year is quite rewarding and making the selections of which ones will be kept is often very difficult. A group of three-year-old seedlings is showing good color, although they are being grown in a pot. This year I will be donating them to Meadowlark Botanical Gardens here in Alexandria.

From what I can see, some of these plants will be quite compact. I am eager to see how they will perform as they age.

— Peter Jones, Arlington, VA

Conifers of the Eastern Sierra The Coachella Valley to White Mountain Peak

by Don Howse

The state of California is rich with a large variety of climates and topography. The climates of the coastal areas of the state range from sub-tropical, to dry Mediterranean, to cool and damp rain forest. Inland, the state becomes generally more arid with a mild Mediterranean aspect. A series of mountain ranges divides the state on a north-south axis, with very dry deserts lying to the east of the mountains in the southern and central portion of the state. The grand Sierra Nevada rise dramatically above these deserts in the central section. These mountains taper off gradually to great forests in the west until they

yield to the rich Central Valley, the agricultural heart of the state.

The dry Mojave and Sonoran Deserts of the southeastern section of the state attract "snowbirds" like myself and my partner, Lloyd Porter, from the cool, and damp Pacific Northwest. As we have matured, we have become drawn to the Coachella Valley for our winter habitation. We enjoy the dry winter weather and an abundance of sunshine. Each October we drive our car

Mt. Whitney as seen from Whitney Portal, where many adventurers start their journeys toward the mountain.



south from Oregon and return the following June, with a few commuter flights between. By early June, the weather in the desert has become quite warm – even hot – so we are always anxious to close up our winter abode and start the drive north across the broad Mojave Desert.

The vast desert floor is dotted with Joshua Trees (*Yucca brevifolia*), mesquite brush, sagebrush, cacti, and dried herbs and grasses. With temperatures often reaching to 115 °F (46 °C) during the daylight hours, we begin our journey early in the morning. The drive across the desert is about 300 miles to the city of Bishop, and we often take several days to stop and enjoy some of the sites I will describe later in this article.

The first 200 miles (320 km) are beautiful in the early morning hours but soon become monotonous. The distant mountains change their colors as the sun rises and illuminates their rocky ridges. Dry pans of ancient lakebeds spread out with eerie white barren floors. The flat desert spreads out in all directions, with arid mountains and hills rising in the distance.

The desert floor rises gradually and the Joshua trees become few and scrawny. As we pass through the old desert mining communities, we crest a hill and find a desert valley ahead of us with the black stripe of pavement stretching into the distance until it ends at the base of craggy mountains. The mountains are abrupt, rising above the barren-looking desert floor. The lower foothills of the mountains also appear barren, but actually are covered with dry brush and withering herbforms that bloomed in the early spring. Higher up

on the slopes, on the alluvial fans, dark-green, scrub-like trees are scattered. These are the **singleleaf pinyon pines** (*Pinus monophylla*).

The singleleaf pinyon pine is found in open woodland forests on the dry, rocky slopes and on ridges throughout the Great Basin of Nevada and the deserts of Southern California. The dark grey-green, short, curved needles of the trees often exude resins. These short, broad-spreading trees grow in thickets and have been a stable food source for the native Americans of the Great Basin and desert regions of California and Nevada for centuries.

Capt. John C. Fremont and his group of US Topographical Engineers were among the early explorers to this region, and at one point they were without food on the snowy slopes of the Eastern Sierra Nevada. Through providence and a generous Indian boy, the edible seeds of these pines prevented their starvation. Many species of birds and rodents feed on the abundant seeds as well. Further, early in the development and exploitation of the California deserts, the wood of this pine was harvested for charcoal to fuel the kilns for smelting of silver and other metallic ores. The forests of pine were quickly decimated due to this activity, but they have rebounded well since the end of the mining.

These hillsides are also home to the **Sierra juniper**, *Juniperus occidentalis* var. *australis*. A few populations of the **Utah juniper**, *Juniperus osteosperma*, also can be found in these desert mountains. The junipers seem to grow higher up the mountain slopes than do the singleleaf pinyon pines, on thin stony soils and what appears to be bare rock. Be-

cause they thrive in very inhospitable sites exposed to bitter winds, the junipers' weather-beaten wood is very picturesque – enough to make a Bonsai master envious of nature's talent.

In the valley bottom, at the base of the rugged and steep mountains, the highway turns northward and parallels

The junipers' weather-beaten wood is very picturesque – enough to make a Bonsai master envious of nature's talent

the mountain ridges. At the southern end of the great range, the steep slopes are mostly clothed with forest and other vegetation. Only small, craggy peaks rise dramatically above the vegetated slopes. This southern end of the Sierra Nevada range is known as the Kern Mountains. To the east across the desert valley, the Inyo Mountains rise from the desert floor. Beyond them lies the Panamint Mountains and Death Valley, the lowest site in North America.

As we drive north along US highway 395, the dry desert floor begins to give way to agriculture. Alfalfa and grass used for hay grow in irrigated fields that, if allowed to go dry, would soon be reclaimed by the native desert vegetation. We cross an open canal in the desert and read a sign that explains that this is the water destined for the City of Los Angeles. We are entering the broad Owens River Valley with its immense, dusty lakebed drained for the swimming pools, golf courses and green lawns of the great city 200 miles (320 km) to the south.

As we head north, the vertical walls of granite rise to mighty peaks and narrow towers. Snow lies in the crevasses, and tiny threads of water cascade down the steep ravines. These are some of the world's steepest mountain ridges, rising almost vertically above the valley floor. A herd of elk grazes in the agricultural fields along the highway, and a sign explains that this herd is the remnant of the vast Tule elk herds that once roamed this valley and lower mountain slopes. We eventually come to the city of Lone Pine, California – a quaint community with a grand view of the imposing Sierra Nevada.

Above the town there is a ridge of pinnacles, the highest of which is Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the lower 48 states at 14,494 feet (4417 m). Turning left at the center of town, we drive west toward the wall of granite. Between us and the mighty Sierra Nevada is a low range of undulating and folded hills with exposed rock formations, called the Alabama Hills. These picturesque hills are actually an ancient, eroded mountain range, and they stretch out before the magnificent granite wall. These hills and their narrow ravines are quite familiar to all of us who have seen the many "Westerns" filmed here during the last century. Tom Mix, John Wayne, Gene Autrey, and all the great heroes of the genre chased their adversaries through these picturesque hills.

The narrow paved road quickly rises from the Alabama Hills, and the desert floor is covered with sagebrush and dry grasses to the craggy and vertical mountainsides. The road climbs rapidly in zig-zag fashion up the granite wall through a series of switchback turns.

Alpine wild flowers cover the lower slopes of the dry mountainside; bright red Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja miniata*), and red penstemons (*Penstemon rostriflorus*) contrast with the blue lupines (*Lupinus longefolius*) and blue penstemons (*Penstemon laetus*). Large, white, poppy-like flowers better known as prickly poppies (*Argemone munita*) line the roadside edge as if planted by gardeners. One notable flower endemic only to the western states is the mariposa lily (*Calochortus leichtlinii*), also commonly known as the sego lily or cats-ears, can be found in the rock crevices and screes.

Numerous other wildflowers bring the arid mountain slopes to life. From the edge of the mountain wall, we look out thousands of feet over the desert to the wind-blown dust devils out on the dry lake bed of what once was Owens Lake, and the Inyo Mountains rise above its eastern shore. At the top of the vertical wall and after several more switchbacks in the road, we enter a forested alpine valley. A roaring cascade is carrying the snowmelt to the desert floor beyond and to the aqueduct that delivers the precious cargo to the City of Los Angeles. Our entrance to the green alpine valley is at an altitude of about 9,000 feet (2743 m), some 6,000 feet (1800 m) above the valley floor below. Within the narrow valley we find green trees and brush as well as a fishing resort, store, and campground at the end of the road. We are at Whitney Portal, where the trailhead to the top of Mt. Whitney begins. Intrepid mountain climbers, backpackers, fishermen, and other outdoors enthusiasts park here and begin their adventures into the "High Sierra."

Sierra-Cascade lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *murrayana*), and **California red fir** (*Abies magnifica*) are the two primary conifer species that comprise this alpine valley's forest. The lodgepole pines are slow-growing, medium-sized trees that may reach 100 feet (30 m), with trunk diameters of approximately 4 feet (120 cm). The trunks are straight and the crown of the tree is narrow, except where snow and other mechanical factors have modified a tree's habit. This pine has greater trunk diameter than the other varieties of lodgepole pine found throughout the western states. It also differs in that the cones do not require the heat of a fire to open; rather, they open in fall and release the winged seeds from high in the branches. The Sierra-Cascade lodgepole pine is found growing in moist places along creek banks and around meadows throughout the Sierra Nevada, often in conjunction with California red fir, **white fir** (*Abies concolor*), **Jeffrey pine** (*Pinus jeffreyi*), and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*).

The **California red fir** is also known as the **California silver fir**. This fir is found throughout the Sierra Nevada mountains from the Kern Range above the Mojave Desert to the volcanic Cascade peaks near the Oregon line. These beautiful trees can be very tall and magnificent. Specimens are known to reach well over 200 feet (60 m) in height with base diameters over 10 feet (3 m). These firs are found where the winter snows build up in deep drifts, and they grow straight with narrow crowns and blue-green foliage borne on horizontal limbs. Their conifer companions in other areas of the Sierra-Cascade ranges often in-

clude **white fir**, **Jeffrey pine**, **Western white pine** (*Pinus monticola*), **white bark pine** (*Pinus albicaulis*) and **mountain hemlock** (*Tsuga mertensiana*).

Horseshoe Meadows

We return to the lower elevations near Lone Pine by the same narrow road

along the base of the mountains. As we approach the Alabama Hills, I notice another road branching off with a sign pointing the way to Horseshoe Meadows. I had heard about the rare **foxtail pine** (*Pinus balfouriana*) growing in this region as well as seen photos of the tree in *Conifers: The Illustrated Encyclopedia* by J.R.P. van Hoey Smith and D.M. van Gelderan (Timber Press, 1996, Vol. II, pp. 441-442). Specifically, I recalled the photo of a tree that van Hoey Smith has named 'Horseshoe Pillar.' We decide to follow this road, and on the lower rugged mountain walls we see beautiful specimens of the singleleaf pinyon pine. **California red firs** and **Sierra-Cascade lodgepole pines** begin to appear as we climb the steady upward grade via another set of switchbacks. A few **Jeffrey pines** also grow out of cracks and crevices of the granite rock.

After an hour's drive, the arid desert floor disappears from sight and we enter another alpine valley at close to 10,000 feet (3000 m) in elevation. Meadows, a roaring stream, and abundant forest



Pinus balfouriana
'Horseshoe Pillar,' named by J.R.P. van Hoey Smith, in the area known as Horseshoe Meadows.

greet us. The road terminates at a US Forest Service campground and trail-head, where trails to remote alpine lakes and the crest of the Sierra Nevada begin. Here are young specimens of the rare **foxtail pine**, tall and straight among the surrounding vegetation like fangs among molars.

I'm thrilled to find that we can drive right up to these trees and, with camera in hand, I walk into the grove in awe. These narrow spires at Horseshoe Meadows are young trees relative to others in the area; out on the trails are old specimens often growing at an angle with tapering trunks and half-dead tops,



having been damaged by severe winter storms or other environmental factors. The bark of the older trees is orange and deeply furrowed, and the age of the oldest trees in the Sierra Nevada is estimated at around 3,000 years. As I wander among this grove of trees, I find many open and ravaged cones on the ground but no sign of seed. Evidently the local fauna – the birds and squirrels – harvested the crop and stowed it away.

The foxtail pine is found only in California but in two distinct populations that are separated by hundreds of miles. The southern population is here on the eastern slopes and crest of the Sierra Nevada. The northern population is found in the Klamath range, near Mt. Shasta, and close to the Oregon border. Scientists are looking at ancient paleontological records to determine the connection between the two populations. Taxonomists and dendrologists have determined that the foxtail pine, the **Great Basin bristlecone pine** (*Pinus longaeva*), and the **Rocky Mountain bristlecone pine** (*Pinus aristata*) are all closely related. It is worth noting that the westernmost population of Great Basin bristlecone pines in the United States is found a mere twenty miles across the Owens Valley, in the White Mountains.

As I wander around the campground and picnic area, I notice some very large and grotesque

The bark of older foxtail pines is orange and deeply furrowed.

trees that turn out to be the **Sierra-Cascade lodgepole pine**. They have massive trunks and broad, voluminous crowns of dark-green foliage, and a witches' broom in one of the trees catches my eye. Alas, there is not much use collecting scions in early June as they are beginning their annual growth cycle, with buds extended and flush with new emerging foliage.

The ground in this area is still bare, as the snow has only recently melted away. Tiny herbaceous plants are beginning to emerge from the ground, ready to burst into spring bloom. Adjacent to the campground is a pack station for trail riding adventurers. In the parking area near the pack station, I observe a foxtail pine that also appears to include a witches' broom high in its branches.

A view of Onion Valley, near Golden Trout Lake.



As if these sights aren't enough, I am also able to see the very tree that Dick van Hoey Smith had named 'Horseshoe Pillar,' which is very narrow with ascending branches.

The next town to the north of Lone Pine along US Highway 395 is called Independence. Independence is the county seat for Inyo County, California, and each year as I drive by I admire a **Colorado spruce** (*Picea pungens*) that is planted in front of the courthouse. It stands about 40 or 50 feet (12 to 15 m) in height with bright blue foliage and appears to have been heavily sheared. As I look at it again, however, I believe it is not sheared but rather a very distinct selection of the well-known landscape tree. Someday I will stop and investigate more closely.

In the city of Independence we pass an outdoor museum of very old farm and mining equipment displaying old

wagons, coaches, and buggies from the early settlers of the Owens Valley. Our route leads again to the base of the steep granite mountains, the Sierra Nevada, and after another heavy dose of hairpin turns, we arrive at Onion Valley high up in the mountains. **Sierra-Cascade lodgepole pines** grow along the rushing stream, and one specimen with beautiful orange bark has a significant witches' broom in the lower branches, just out of reach from the road edge (see photo inside back cover).

The paved road ends at another US Forest Service campground and trailhead, with trails to Golden Trout Lake and Kearsarge. At the edge of the parking lot by the trailhead I see a young **foxtail pine**, only a few feet in height. I have hiked a ways onto this trail and found beautiful specimens of the foxtail pine, and nearby I am able get very close



to a tree loaded with pitch-covered cones that leave me with glued fingers in addition to a few hard-won seeds. A little further along the trail I encounter a granite ridge with very old specimens of the same species. They have massive trunks and many of the tops were bare of foliage and polished, having endured numerous harsh winters here at about 11,500 feet (3500 m) of elevation. I revered these beautiful trees like a religious fanatic before a holy icon.

Many other beautiful specimens were to be seen along the short hike from the Onion Valley trailhead. Further up the trail near the crest of the Sierra were old specimens of **white bark pine**. Here on these high ridges, harsh winds and heavy snow loads bend the trees over to form shrubby krummholz. The windward sides of the trees are often bare from the constant wind, while the leeward side is flush

with green foliage. The bare bark truly is strikingly white as the common name implies. This species' seeds are a major food source for the Clark's nutcracker, who stows the seeds away in secret caches, and from these treasure troves the young trees emerge, often among the rocks and scree. The array of wildflowers in June adds to the enjoyment

Pinus longaeva (Great Basin bristlecone pine), growing in the Ancient Bristlecone Forest, is closely related to *Pinus aristata*, the Rocky Mountain Bristlecone Pine.

of this alpine region.

Returning to the desert floor and again driving north on US Highway 395, we come to the city of Big Pine at about 3,500 feet (1100 m) in elevation. At the north end of town, State Highway 168 intersects and leads through a

The windward sides of the trees are often bare from the constant wind, while the leeward side is flush with green foliage

pass in the White Mountains to the Nevada state line. Up in the White Mountains, a side road leads to the Ancient Bristlecone Forest managed by the Inyo National Forest. This is the high altitude home of the western-most population of the **Great Basin bristlecone pine** (*Pinus longaeva*), and these trees are famous for being the oldest known living trees, some being more than 4,500 years of age.

As the road climbs again from the desert floor into the arid White Mountains, we enter a very narrow canyon. We notice once again the low forests of **singleleaf Pinyon pine** and colonies of **Utah juniper**. They inhabit the dry gritty soils and seem to survive without any apparent water source. The pines spread their broad branches and display a bounty of cones – each tree is unique and would be a delight to a bonsai artist. Likewise, the junipers lift their green sprays upward, loaded with glaucous berries that smell like gin when crushed.

As the road climbs high into the mountains we enjoy the view to the east,

toward Nevada, over the Deep Springs valley and a blue alkaline lake. Eventually we come to the western edge of the mountains and a panoramic view of the Owens Valley and the wall of granite known as the Sierra Nevada. The Palisade Glacier, the southernmost glacier in North America, is seen among the jagged peaks across the valley. The city of Bishop looks tiny as it lies several thousand feet below us among irrigated fields of alfalfa and other crops. We begin to notice old specimens of **limber pine** (*Pinus flexilis*) reaching to the sky with multiple limbs and branches that are often bare at the tips. The limber pine's needles are arranged in short tufts at the ends of the branchlets. These trees, which are more prevalent in the mountains to the east, are scattered here along the slopes of the alpine ridges in the White Mountains. The seeds are collected and stored by blue jays and Clark's and, as with the white bark pine, these stored seeds sometimes produce clumps of trees.

Just beyond the groves of limber pine, at about 9,500 feet, we see the first examples of the **Great Basin bristlecone pines**. Soon we come to the end of the paved road at the visitor center, located at the Schulman Grove, where the late Dr. Edmund Schulman found the oldest specimens of these magnificent trees. Dr. Schulman was a scientist from the University of Arizona who spent his career examining tree rings and climate, and in doing so he searched through the western mountains for ancient specimens that he could core to count the annual rings.

Near the visitor's center is a one-mile loop trail that takes the visitor to

observe numerous picturesque trees that are weather-beaten and very old. Photographic opportunities abound as one walks the trails at the Schulman Grove. Another trail is about four miles in length and brings visitors to the oldest specimens including Methusaleh, which is estimated to be about 4,600 years of age. To protect it from vandals it is no longer identified, but many others of remarkable age exist here as well. The Great Basin bristlecone pines do not grow tall, only reaching 20 to 40 feet (6 to 12 m) at maturity. Most of the tree



may appear dead, with only a thin strip of cambium keeping leeward branches of foliage alive. A visitor can easily spend an entire day here admiring nature's tenacity.

There is another sanctuary grove, the Patriarch Grove, 12 miles further along a gravel road from the visitor's center. Here we can see The Patriarch, the largest known specimen of the species. This youngster is only 1500 years of age but is unusually large because of the favorable growing conditions at this 11,000-foot (3300 m) elevation site. Again there is a looping trail that takes the visitor to see many old weathered trees.

Before driving to this site, you must take precautions if you are not accustomed to high altitudes. When visiting any part of the arid mountains or desert, you absolutely must bring plenty of drinking water with you. I also recommend sunscreen and a hat to deflect the intense sunshine. Avoid strenuous hiking, and be sure to take short walks and lots of rest stops along the trails. I have found myself a bit light-headed and dizzy when I visited The Patriarch.

White Mountain Peak is the highest point in the White

Patriarch Grove, at an altitude of 11,000 feet (3300 m), is home to old *Pinus longaeva*, the Great Basin bristlecone pines.

Mountain Range, at an altitude of 14,246 feet. The High Altitude Research Station, operated by the University of California, Berkeley, is on the slope of this high desert mountain and houses researchers all year. Though this area is closed to the public, you can drive beyond the Patriarch Grove close to the peak. Wildflowers are abundant in the spring but soon wither under the intense sunlight and arid conditions. These include scarlet penstemon (*Penstemon bridgesii*), Westgard penstemon (*Penstemon scapoides*), wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum anemophilum* and *E. gracilipes*), rock spirea (*Petrophyton caespitosum*), fleabane (*Erigeron clokeyi*), and numerous grasses. After spending a full day in the Ancient Bristlecone Forest, we return to the valley floor and drive up US Highway 395 to the city of Bishop.

On our annual northward migration, we usually stay overnight in Bishop. The trip here across the hot and dry Mojave and then up into alpine valleys can be exhausting, especially with short hikes at high altitudes. After a good dinner and a night's rest, we are ready in the morning to continue our journey along the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada. Look for the continuation of this conifer adventure in a future issue of the *Conifer Quarterly*, including visits to the Mammoth Basin, Mono Lake, Tioga Pass, and Lake Tahoe. ▲

About the author: Don Howse is a longtime active member of the Conifer Society and owner of Porterhowse Farms in Sandy, Oregon.

Conifers on the Web

New e-mail discussion list shows promise

Conifer Obsession is an e-mail discussion group created by Conifer Society member Siegrid Stern that focuses on conifers, including dwarf and unusual cultivars.

Recent discussions have included:

- Types of conifers grown
- Cultivation techniques of certain types
- Seeding and propagating techniques
- Conifer taxonomy and identification
- Conifer-related events
- Other topics of interest to conifer growers

Membership is restricted to:

- Conifer collectors and experienced enthusiasts,
- Botanical gardens and arboreta,
- Growers and professionals from around the world.

To participate, go to:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/conifer_obsession/ and follow the instructions.

Or, e-mail list owner Siegrid Stern at **conifer_obsession@yahoo.com** with questions.

Required reading

The Neighborhood Forager: A Guide for the Wild Food Gourmet

I bought this book about four years ago after I heard the author, Robert K. Henderson, interviewed on several National Public Radio programs. The idea of learning to recognize, harvest and eat wild plants appealed to my back-to-nature side, so I bought the book and started reading from the beginning.

I soon learned that the just-opened spring leaves of *Acer palmatum* (Japanese maple) are edible, and that *Ginkgo biloba* nuts are eaten in many parts of

Asia. (The author provides some simple instructions for drying the smelly fruit outdoors and then peeling it away – then just fry the nuts, add some salt, and voilà!)

Two years ago, when I became more involved with the Conifer Society, I returned to the book and re-read Chapter 2, called “Ever Eat a Pine Tree?” It begins, “The well-loved smell of a Christmas tree triggers a range of feelings, but hunger is seldom one of them.”

However, this is likely to change once you read about conifers’ tasty seeds, their edible buds, and beverages brewed using

spruce tips, juniper berries and other conifer-garden bounty. Most of us are familiar with the pine nuts produced commercially from pinyon pine (*Pinus edulis*), but did you know that digger pine (*P. sabiniana*), Coulter or big cone pine (*P. coulteri*), Italian stone pine (*P. pinea*), Swiss stone pine (*P. cembra*) and *P. mugo* also produce edible seeds? Or try adding conifer tips to tomato-based sauces for a “resiny-sweet tang.”

This book blurs the distinction between edible and ornamental plants, focusing mainly on those commonly found growing in the suburban landscape. Bon appétit!

- Anne M. Brennan

What's on your bookshelf?

In addition to the “must-have” conifer reference books listed on conifersociety.org, you probably have some favorite titles that include useful or humorous tidbits about our favorite plants.

Don't keep these books a secret – **tell us about them!** Send the editor the title(s), publication date(s) and the reason for your recommendation.

The Jean Iseli Memorial Award

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

The Conifer Society, which supports the development, conservation and propagation of conifers with an emphasis on dwarf or unusual varieties, awards a \$1,000 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:

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

Send applications to:

Edward R. Hasselkus, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus
746 Miami Pass
Madison, WI 53711-2933

Applications must be received by March 31, 2005

Dr. Hasselkus 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 September 1, 2005.

Publication information: Henderson, Robert K. *The Neighborhood Forager*. Chelsea Green Publishing Co., White River Junction, VT. 2000. ISBN 1-890132-35-7

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Organizational Name Change Explained

John Martin, our National Office Manager, developed an explanatory document, regarding the Society name, to place in our Director's Manual. It is very concise and deserves to be shared with all members. At the same time, it may be helpful to repeat the reasoning behind the name "change," or name shortening, whichever way you want to look at it.

In 2001, while we were making improvements to the Society's publication, primarily a name change from *Bulletin to Conifer Quarterly*, the Board also felt we needed an improved marketing piece that would be more eye-catching and colorful. Jane Frampton, Editor at that time, led the work of the publications committee, with some outside design assistance, to develop the forerunner of the colorful booklet we now use for attracting new members. During that design study, we continually discussed and analyzed who we are and how

we refer to ourselves both internally and externally. Many members have long felt the need to recognize the international flavor of our organization and this, along with a desire for simplification, led to a consensus that dropping American would broaden our scope and provide a clear and simple identifier – The Conifer Society.

The shorthand reference to us as the ACS may be good internally but has little or no significance outside our sphere since there are well over a dozen ACS organizations (the biggest being the American Chemical Society and the American Cancer Society). At their February 2002 meeting, the Board unanimously approved the trade name change to "The Conifer Society" for publications and promotional purposes. As John explains below, we legally are still the American Conifer Society.

– Marvin Snyder, past president

Foreword to Articles of Incorporation

At times there is confusion about the proper name of our society. A brief history and explanation follows.

American Conifer Society

The Society was incorporated as a non-profit using the name "American Conifer Society" in 1983 under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Subsequently, the American Conifer Society applied for and was granted 501 (c) (3) standing as a nonprofit charitable organization with the US Internal Revenue Service. Our standing as a nonprofit Pennsylvania corporation, registration with the IRS as American

Conifer Society under which our consolidated (national and regional) tax return is filed, has not changed. All society bank accounts and business registrations are in the name of the American Conifer Society, and this is still the legal name of our organization.

American Conifer Society Inc. a/k/a American Conifer Society

In May of 2000 the society national office moved to Maryland. Maryland, as do most states, requires that all corporations incorporated in another state and doing business in Maryland, register as a "foreign" (meaning from outside the state) corpora-

tion. Maryland law also requires that any corporation doing business in the state have the words "Corporation, Company, Limited or Incorporated" or an acceptable abbreviation as a part of the registered business name, or register under an "assumed name" which includes those words. Therefore, our registered business name as a foreign corporation in the state of Maryland is "American Conifer Society Inc. a/k/a American Conifer Society," the a/k/a standing for "also known as."

The Conifer Society

In 2002 the Board decided that the society should be known as "The Conifer Society." Since changing the name on our existing registrations was a potentially complicated and expensive burden, the society regis-

tered a trade name with the state of Maryland to do business as (d.b.a.) "The Conifer Society" and began to use that name in our publications and literature. The purpose of trade name registration is to let third parties who encounter the trade name know the identity of the legal entity using the name. It is important to note that registration of a trade name in a particular state is not meant to reserve the name for exclusive use, to act as a trademark filing, or to confer on the entity registering the name any greater right to the name than already possessed.

Prepared June 15, 2004 by John Martin, National Office Manager, American Conifer Society Inc. a/k/a American Conifer Society d.b.a. The Conifer Society ▲

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Western Region gathers in Washington

On October 9th, about 40 members toured Ed and Sharon Stanford's garden overlooking Puget Sound, plus Bob and Dianne Fincham's Coenosium Gardens.

Photos by Peter Conrad



Bob Fincham welcomes attendees to Coenosium Gardens.



Randy Oster with Rita Osters' plant acquisitions from Coenosium Gardens!



Don Howse went shopping too.



A tempting collection of plants awaits the start of the verbal auction.



Left to right:
Eric Fincham,
Dianne Fincham
and Rita Oster

Southeastern Region sets new attendance record

by Tom Cox

Buoyed by great gardens, entertaining speakers and wonderful weather, the Southeastern region set an all-time attendance record for their annual meeting that was held in Raleigh, NC, on October 8th & 9th.

As anyone who has ever tried to grow conifers in heavy clay soil – coupled with both high day and nighttime temperatures – will attest, growing conifers in this region is a challenge. Thank goodness, folks are accepting the challenge, and the region continues to increase participation and generate interest.

The meeting was kicked off with a keynote address by Todd Lasseigne, Ph.D., Assistant Director of the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, who spoke on the conifer trials at the Raulston Arboretum. The next morning, attendees were treated to four very different garden settings that ranged from an unbelievable collection of deciduous and coniferous flora in a woodland setting to more formal gardens that feature conifers as the main event. As one member remarked, "Attendees were certainly not short-changed on seeing a wide array of plants from around the world."

The evening event featured a second guest lecturer, John Ruter Ph.D., University of Georgia Extension Center, who spoke on conifer trials in coastal Georgia. Despite having to deliver his talk without the benefit of his Power-Point presentation, due to a blown pro-



jector bulb, Dr. Ruter provided great insight into which conifers would grow in a coastal environment. As the Southeast region looks to expand its membership, this data will prove invaluable.

And then, what many conifer nuts consider to be the "icing on the cake" – the silent and verbal auctions ended the evening. Thanks to the kind generosity of a number of growers and a stellar performance by our auctioneer, Dr. Lasseigne, over 130 conifers received new homes. The amount of money that was raised also set a record for our Region.

In summary, thanks to the committed efforts of a number of dedicated individuals, this meeting was not only a huge success but will also serve as a springboard for increased interest in a region where conifers have too long been overlooked. ▲

Society members participate in NY Botanical Garden Conifer Event

by Walter Cullerton

Saturday, October 30, 2004 was the Benenson Ornamental Conifers Grand Opening at The New York Botanical Garden. A full day of conifer activities was planned and The Conifer Society was invited. The weather was overcast, but no rain was falling and the temperature was about right. It promised to be a great day.

The Conifer Society was allowed to display a few conifers, distribute membership applications and answer questions from visitors. The Goodwins, Michael Larned, Larry Nau, Harry Oefinger, Melanie Wyler and yours truly all enjoyed the chance to meet gardeners, field conifer questions and share our enthusiasm.

Events were held throughout the day, so each person could attend them all or pick and choose. Todd Forrest, Associate Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections gave an insider's view of the restoration of the collection. While he led a tour through the garden, he discussed the protection of existing plants during restoration, selection of new conifers, the process of positioning the new additions, and planting of the conifers.

Dr. Sidney Waxman of the University of Connecticut gave a wonderful presentation on "Witches' Brooms and Marvelous Dwarfs." Since 1963, Dr. Waxman has selected and introduced more than 30 new ornamental pines,

hemlocks, larches and Japanese umbrella pine cultivars, many grown from seed collected from witches' brooms. Many of these plants have found their way into the Benenson Collection. A Q&A session followed – a source of both learning and conifer yearning.

Adrian Bloom, author and conifer



Expert plantsman and author Adrian Bloom (with microphone) draws a crowd.

expert from England, attended the event and led a walk and discussion through the collection. He was also available to autograph copies of his much-treasured book, *Gardening with Conifers*.

A home gardening demonstration, "Conifer Selection and Planting Techniques," was offered twice during the day by Sonia Uytterhoeven of the NYBG staff. Conifer Society member George Smith of Blue Sterling Nursery held another home gardening demonstration,



Top: Todd Forrester (left), curator of the Benenson Collection, stands with Sidney Waxman, who gave a presentation on witches' brooms.



Bottom: The original *Picea pungens* 'R. H. Montgomery' still grows at NYBG.

Marie Long gave a guided tour of this exhibition, highlighted by the botanical art and magnificent books relating to conifers. The exhibition illuminated the astonishing diversity of conifers as well as the many roles of conifers in their natural habitats and in their uses by human beings, from culinary to medical, economic and garden design. Regrettably, I missed this opportunity and feel as though I may have missed the real gem of the entire day. I'm planning a return trip when I'll try to find Curator Long for a little direction in retracing, as much as possible, the exhibits of this wonderful day.

I can't offer enough congratulations, and thanks to Dr Kim Tripp and every one of the staff at the New York Botanical Garden. And my thanks also to The Conifer Society volunteers for a job well done.

It was a great day! Clearly this was an event of significance in the conifer world. ▲

"Dwarf Conifers and Container Planting." With a selection of sun- and shade-tolerant varieties on hand, George showed the masses how to create a variety of container plantings with these terrific plants.

And last, but not least in this celebration of ornamental conifers was "Cultured Conifers: Rare Works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library." Curator

Walter Cullerton is the president of the Northeastern Region and lives in Pineville, Pennsylvania.

Gardening in Small Spaces: Design Lessons from Gerald Kral's Garden



Organized chaos

Jerry likes to surround tall specimen conifers with a single species of contrasting foliage, an effect he calls "skirting." He says this draws the eye toward the specimen, even when there are many other plants nearby competing for attention.

Surprise, surprise

This sunken oasis sits about four feet below grade and, surrounded by dense conifers, remains unnoticed until visitors open an unobtrusive gate. With so many paths to follow, one is only vaguely aware that something undiscovered must lie in the center of the garden.

Last September, just about the time I was assessing my own garden-design progress and second guessing some of my plans, The Northeast Region met in Rochester for their annual meeting, and we visited a garden that put my fears to rest.

I've worried from time to time that "too many plants" in a small garden will create an effect of claustrophobic chaos.



I've thought, too, that planting slow-growing conifers in the vicinity of tall shade trees would result in a confusing conflict of scale – the small plants would look even smaller. And that's not all. How can I make a small backyard garden feel larger than it really is?

Jerry Kral's one-acre paradise is proof that anxious types like me should just relax, have fun, and see what develops. Three of the lessons I took away from his garden are shown here. Thanks, Jerry, for the inspiration!

– Anne Brennan



The long and winding road

The substantial stone paths throughout Jerry's garden reassure visitors that they are heading *somewhere*, and sure enough, sculptural and botanical surprises reward the journey. What is actually a compact garden seems almost endless.

Anne Brennan is Editor of the Conifer Quarterly.





Island groupings such as these (above and lower right) can be viewed from all sides.

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The Conifer Society welcomes advertising from companies and individuals selling conifers, companion plants, gardening supplies and other plant-related products and services.

A Day at the “Beech” with Marlowe Marcus

As part of the Garden Conservancy’s 2004 Open Days program, Conifer Society member Marlowe Marcus from Haworth, New Jersey, welcomed visitors to his garden on May 22nd. Marlowe’s suburban garden is unique in that it features a bewildering variety of both conifers and beech (*Fagus* spp.) growing among large, more typical shade trees.

Half of the Garden Conservancy’s \$5 entry fee was donated to the Conifer Society’s Northeast Region. According to treasurer Harry Oefinger, the region received \$162.94 from this event. Even more important was the experience local gardeners enjoyed in meeting this exuberant conifer evangelist and seeing – perhaps for the first time – unusual conifers so effectively arranged in the landscape.



Right: Marlowe Marcus greets visitors to his garden on May 22, 2004.



All photos by Tony Green

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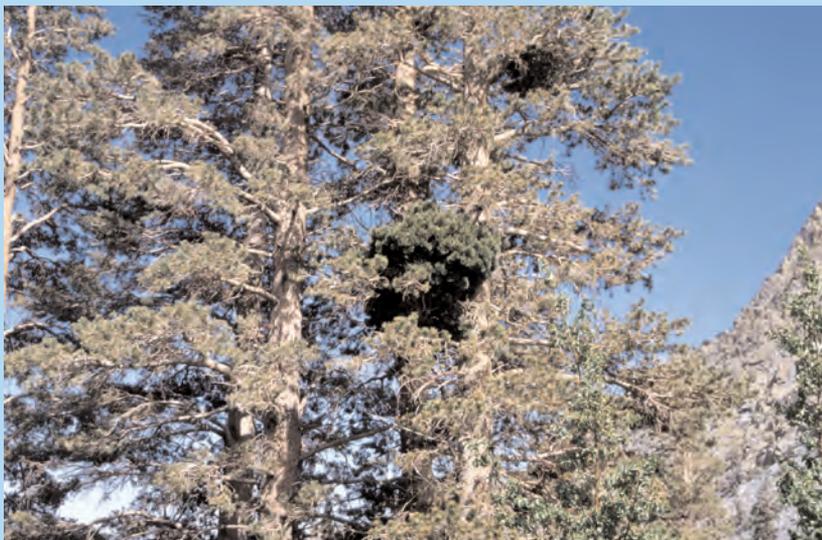
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Don Howse



This *Pinus contorta* witches' broom in Onion Valley caught Don Howse's eye as he traveled through the Sierra Nevada. See page 25.

Peter Jones



These promising seedlings are part of Peter Jones' ongoing experiments with seed-propagated *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. Read more on page 24.

Charlene Harris



Chamaecyparis nootkatensis 'Variegata'



Bill Berger

Pinus parviflora 'Fubuki Nishiki'



Mark Dwyer

Juniperus chinensis 'Saybrook Gold'