

# *ConiferQuarterly*

Vol. 32 No. 1

WINTER 2015



*Pinus aristata* before sunrise  
on Windy Ridge, New Mexico.  
Photo by David Rasch

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*In the Shadow of the Giants*



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*Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens*



*The Neglected Conifer*

*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.*



# Conifer Quarterly

## WINTER 2015 • Volume 32, No. 1

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

## Winter CQ 2015 Announcements

### ► Southeast Regional Director

Tom Neff has a new title. The Board of Directors has approved Tom as our new Vice President and Treasurer. Tom is highly qualified. He is a CPA and auditor. He spent twenty-five years in the insurance business, mostly in financial roles. He diversified into sales and marketing, customer service, and general management. Tom is now semi-retired, doing part-time consulting in finance, management information systems, and organizational and strategic planning. He collects trees and is creating an arboretum at his home in Marietta, Georgia. In addition to his work on behalf of the ACS, Tom spends considerable time volunteering with the Sierra Club at the chapter level, where he has also served as chair and on national committees.

### ► The Jean Iseli Memorial Award

is now accepting applications for its 2015 grant. Please send applications to Ethan Johnson, The Holden Arboretum, 9500 Sperry Rd., Kirtland, OH 44904 ([ejohnson@holdenarb.org](mailto:ejohnson@holdenarb.org)).

### ► Send your articles and photos to

Ron Elardo at [ConQuartEditor@gmail.com](mailto:ConQuartEditor@gmail.com) and be part of the Conifer Quarterly legacy which reaches every member of the ACS.

# Write for *Conifer Quarterly* and Leave a Legacy

By Ron Elardo

**M**any of you have written for *Conifer Quarterly*, and your efforts have always received favorable results. Emails and phone calls from ACS members to me continue to compliment the work you have done. When you write for the *CQ*, you are providing a valuable service to the American Conifer Society, its members and anyone interested in conifers; conifer conservation; correct nomenclature; preservation and conservation. By writing for the *CQ*, you are embodying the mission of the ACS by educating all who receive it.

What was once seen as a rush to electronic magazines, more and more organizations and publication companies are returning and have returned to print publications. Thus, *Conifer Quarterly* is at the forefront of print publications. Further, magazines are increasingly becoming subject-specialized. Once again, your *CQ* stands among the newest of trends. *Conifer Quarterly* insures quality of information in a specialized area.

The winter is a time to sit back, read a book and enjoy the view from the warmth of your inside-home. It can be a time to write for *Conifer Quarterly*. I look forward to working with you and to reading your thoughts. Email or call me to discuss your project. As I have repeatedly said: "Writing is just telling a story." Imagine yourself spending half an hour talking about conifers, and you have "written" an article. How many of us conifer-lovers can limit ourselves to just 30 minutes discussing our avocation?

*Conifer Quarterly* is a rich resource because of you. We talk to each other and to the world through it. It belongs to you. You can expect in 2015 further improvements and highlighting of your work. Come join your colleagues and friends and leave a written legacy. Thank you.

**Deadlines for submission of articles and photography are:  
February 15 for Spring, May 15 for Summer, August 15 for Fall  
and November 15 for Winter 2016.**

# President's Message

By Brian Jacob

I am pleased to announce that Tom Neff, Southeastern Regional Director, has been named our new Vice President and Treasurer by the Board of Directors of the ACS. Tom is highly qualified for these duties, having served in many professional financial roles in insurance, investment, sales, marketing and customer service. He has volunteered for the Sierra Club at the local level. Tom is an avid conifer collector and is creating an arboretum at his home in Marietta, Georgia.

In other Board news, the Western Region has two new representatives: David Olszyk of Olympia, Washington, is President, and Anton Klemens of West Linn, Oregon, is the new Director. Colby Feller of New York is once again the Northeastern Region President, while Mike Mahoney is the new Director from the Northeast. With Tom Neff now VP and Treasurer, the Southeastern Region will present Neil Fusillo of Marietta, GA, to the Board in Tampa for election to serve the remainder of Tom's term.

I am pleased to announce that San Francisco Botanical Garden has been accepted as the newest ACS Conifer Reference Garden. SFBG has a notable conifer collection in a multi-environment setting and will be on the tour of our national meeting. The Garden looks forward to providing a personalized experience for us, with current and former curators and directors hosting our group. This kind of partnership exemplifies the value of our Reference Garden program, whereby we enjoy a much richer experience than that of the casual visitor.

This year's national meeting in Sonoma, California, will bring many surprises. You will be able to register for it and the post tour earlier than ever before. Members have already registered for hotel rooms. We will turn no one away. Plan to make this meeting a wonderful chance for an exciting stay in Northern California. Online registration on the website will win you the chance at a free conifer raffle.

The Western Region members utilize technology a great deal. The largest number of email and website communications come from the Western Region. Come join in! It's easy and free. We'd love to see more of you utilize these media. Email [acsnationaloffice@gmail.com](mailto:acsnationaloffice@gmail.com) or [webeditor@conifersociety.org](mailto:webeditor@conifersociety.org) to get online.

During this winter season, I wish you happy dreams about your garden for the coming year. I look forward to seeing you at our national meeting in September.



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# In the Shadow of the Giants

In 2015 the National Meeting moves to September, heads west and goes native

By Sara Malone • Photos by Janice M. LeCocq

**C**oast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) are the tallest trees and among the oldest living things on Earth, with documented heights of over 375' and lifespans in the thousands of years. Once they grew in Asia and Europe, but today their range is limited to a narrow band along the Pacific Ocean from southern Oregon to just south of San Francisco. Some of the most magnificent remaining stands are found in Sonoma County, California, where we will gather in September, 2015 for this year's national meeting.

The California Wine Country is one of the top vacation destinations in the United States. A poll by *Sunset Magazine* rated it the best wine country in California in 2012, by one vote over Napa. September is the prime time of the year in Sonoma; the grape harvest is finishing, and the crush has begun. The days are balmy and warm, and nights cool and mild. The valleys have a Tuscan feel.

The 2015 meeting showcases a few select gardens: two very large, private gardens and two ACS Reference Gardens, supplemented by lunch in an old-growth redwood forest, a keynote speaker who is a



Sara Malone in the shadow of the giant *Sequoia sempervirens* in Armstrong Woods State National Reserve in Guerneville



world-renowned expert on the ecology of the redwood canopy, and lunch on the shores of San Francisco Bay. We will also enjoy complimentary wine tastings provided by three Sonoma wineries and so much more.

## Home on the Range

With this meeting, the usual practice of holding the dinners at our hotel will be substituted by meals at Circle Oak Ranch in Petaluma, owned by my husband and me. Not only will this give attendees ample opportunities to visit the Ranch's gardens, but we'll also be able to enjoy three completely differently themed dinners prepared by different chefs. We'll have cocktails and dine in the barn courtyard and the covered arena, surrounded by the auction plants. Because it requires a bit more planning and volunteer involvement, early registrations are particularly helpful and a boon to each registrant. (Web: visit [www.circleoakequine.com](http://www.circleoakequine.com) to learn more about the venue.)

Our welcome dinner on Thursday night will be the first time that we visit the Ranch and view the auction plants. We'll have buses cycling from the hotel, roughly 15 minutes away, to accommodate differing arrival times.

## Through the Garden Gates

Our first stop on Friday will be Hog Hill, the garden of Lew and Mary Reid, in Sebastopol. Lew and Mary's garden has been featured in many garden publications, including a cover story in *Fine Gardening* (June 2014) and a March 2008 article on marthastewart.com. Although they don't have many conifers, the Reids have one of the loveliest gardens in Northern California. A large, stately *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* graces the front entrance. Their garden is perched on a hilltop with panoramic views of Sonoma County, in a particularly mild microclimate which does not see freezes. Many of the choicest specimens are sub-tropical. (Web: Google "Lew and Mary Reid Passionate Pursuit" for an article and photos about the garden.)

We'll go from the sub-tropics to the most iconic of native California ecosystems, an old-growth redwood forest at Armstrong Woods, an 800-acre preserve in Guerneville, and we will wander there among the giants and have a picnic lunch. Armstrong is a perfect spot to take in the redwood ecosystem—a very fragile and unusual one. The most majestic *Sequoia* in Armstrong Woods are over 300' tall and are over 1,000 years old. Docents from the Stewards of the Redwoods will be on hand to assist us during our visit. (Web: Google "Armstrong Woods State Park" for information and photos.)

From Armstrong Woods, we'll head to Circle Oak Ranch. The garden, which is primarily woody plants, encompasses a little over three acres on reclaimed pasture. When my husband and I got here in the late 1990's, there were virtually no plants on the property, save a few ancient oaks and eucalyptus. Today, there are almost 500 different conifers. Native pine cultivars such as those of *Pinus ponderosa* and *Pinus jeffreyi* do particularly well here, as do *Cedrus deodara*, *Cedrus atlantica* and *Picea pungens*. We have over 50 Japanese maple cultivars. The garden has been featured in *Fine Gardening* and *Garden Design* magazines. (Web: see [www.formandfoliage.net](http://www.formandfoliage.net) for articles and photos of the garden with links to other sources).

We will have the opportunity to enjoy complimentary wine tastings by three Sonoma County wineries, as well as an aesthetic pruning demonstration on some of the *Pinus* cultivars by Maryann Lewis, ACS member and President of the Aesthetic Pruners Association. We will also feature bonsai specimens from local practitioners. Dinner that evening will be

a fiesta Mexicana, and we'll hear from our keynote speaker, Professor Stephen Sillett. Professor Sillett teaches at Humboldt State University and is a leading authority on coast redwoods and the ecology of the redwood canopy. His research and experiences in the treetops have been chronicled in Richard Preston's book *The Wild Trees*. (Web: Google "Professor Stephen Sillett" for his resume, photos and videos of his tree-climbing and research.)

## Just for Reference

On Saturday we'll visit two ACS Reference Gardens—Quarryhill Botanical Garden and San Francisco Botanical Garden—and enjoy lunch on the shores of San Francisco Bay. While Friday will have been all about cultivars, this leg will focus more on species plants at two world-class botanical gardens with very different collections and missions.

Quarryhill Botanical Garden, in Glen Ellen, has one of the most important collections of Asian plants in the world. Founded just over 25 years ago, it is dedicated to the conservation of and education about threatened Asian plant species. Virtually all of the plants in the garden have been grown from seed collected in the wild in different Asian countries. The garden is not only a testament to conservation, but proof that a couple of decades are all it takes to create a garden with mature trees and extremely diverse flora. The Garden's director, Bill McNamara, staff plant professionals, and a group of knowledgeable docents will host us.

QBG has fully-grown specimens of *Taiwania cryptomerioides*, *Tsuga chinensis*, *Keteleeria davidiana*, *Glyptostrobus pensilis* and *Fokienia hodginsii*. (Web: see [www.quarryhillbg.org](http://www.quarryhillbg.org) for lots of photos and information.)

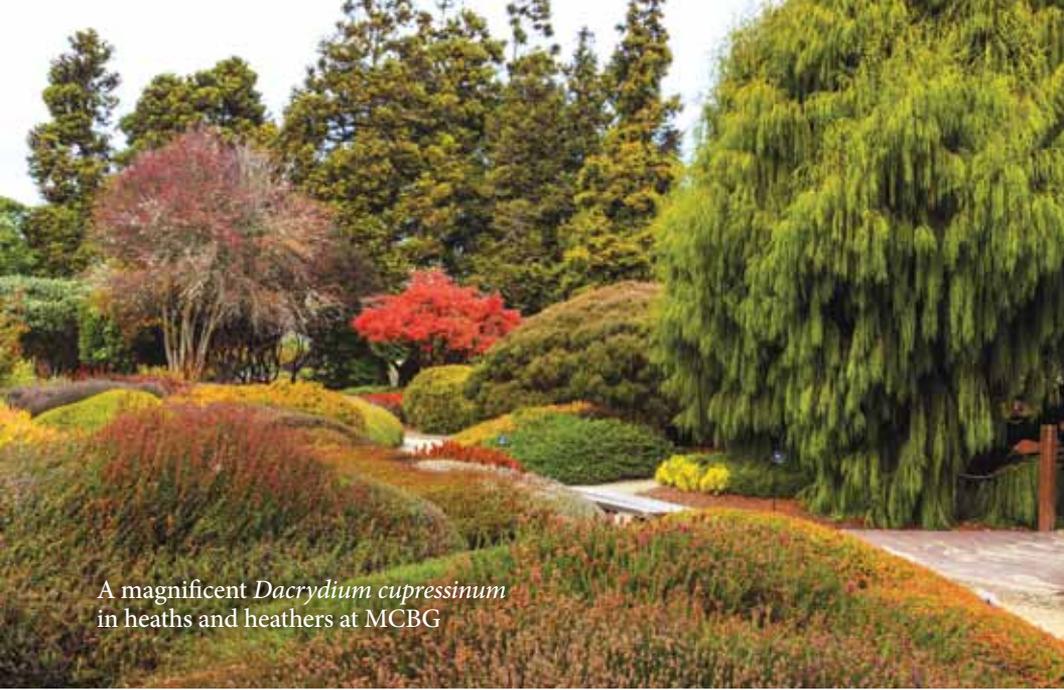
We'll break our drive to our next garden at McNear's Beach Park, where we'll picnic on the hillside under ancient oaks and enjoy views of San Francisco Bay. For those wanting to explore a bit, there are large grassy lawns, a long rocky shoreline and a fishing pier over the water. (Web: Google "McNear's Beach Park, Marin County" for photos.)

San Francisco's mild temperatures—it almost never freezes in winter and average summer temperatures are in the mid-60's—provide climatic conditions which exist in few other botanical gardens in the world. This microclimate is able to recreate conditions of tropical cloud forests of Central and South America, New Zealand, Australia and also temperate Asia. San Francisco Botanical Garden boasts a lovely California native garden and a redwood grove. Conifers are some of the cornerstone plants at SFBG, and the collection numbers over 250 species, with the most important conifer families being Podocarpaceae (13 genera), Araucariaceae, represented by *Araucaria*, *Agathis* and *Wollemia* species. The Garden began as an arboretum in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The dwarf conifer garden, planted in 1960, contains over 100 different species. Dr. Don Mahoney, SFBG's Curator, will host us, along with the Associate Curator and two former Directors. (Web: [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org) for photos, history and info on the conifer collection.)

Our two days of garden visits will culminate in the silent and live plant auctions held at the Ranch after a cowboy barbecue. Pacific Northwest growers promise a lineup of offerings which will have coneheads in a bidding frenzy. Shipping services will be provided for those who can't carry their treasures home with them.

If you're a national meeting regular, or you've never attended one; no matter your geographical locale; conehead or just learning; get yourself registered, book your hotel room and join us in September in the shadow of the giants!

**NOTE:** You may register online and see much more detail, photos and links on the ACS website, [www.conifersociety.org](http://www.conifersociety.org); so, make sure to check there for additional information and any changes.



A magnificent *Dacrydium cupressinum*  
in heaths and heathers at MCBG

## Post Meeting Tour to Mendocino

After the national meeting, we'll be leaving Sonoma's sheltered valleys and head to coastal Mendocino, where the ocean's proximity means nearly frostless winters and cool summers. September is the warmest, sunniest month there, with the least coastal fog, making the dramatic ocean vistas easy to enjoy.

**E**n route to Mendocino, we'll stop in the town of Occidental, where you'll have a choice of activities. For those not afraid of heights, there is ziplining in the redwood canopy, which allows you to experience conifers in a very different way. The sights and smells from the treetops are unique. There is also a spiral staircase around one of the trunks and a treetop swinging bridge. Ziplining does not require physical strength or athletic prowess, just a strong head and stomach. (Web: for photos and information visit [www.sonomacanopytours.com](http://www.sonomacanopytours.com).)

For those inclined to stay on terra firma, you'll visit the nearby Western Hills Garden, which began as the private garden of Marshall

Olbrich and Lester Hawkins, who in the early 1960s began to collect seeds and plants from other Mediterranean climates such as South Africa, Chile and Australia. The garden writer Wayne Winterrowd wrote in *Horticulture* in 2005 that “from around 1970 to the present, no garden in North America has had a greater influence than Western Hills”, and called it a “trove of knowledge”. *The New York Times* once called it the “Tiffany” of plants. (Web: visit [www.westernhillsgarden.com](http://www.westernhillsgarden.com) for information and links to articles.)

From Occidental, we'll head up the coastal highway to Frog Song Farm, the private garden of ACS member Sandy Scott in Point Arena, our first stop in Mendocino County. Sandy, a lifelong gardener and plant collector, has created an estate-style garden in view of the ocean. The plant collection focuses on genera which grow well in this maritime climate. We'll enjoy a leisurely visit and have lunch in the garden. (Web: Google “Frog Song Farm Point Arena” for more information and photos.)

We will next travel farther up the coast to Little River to our hotel, where we'll relax and have dinner overlooking Mendocino's dramatic seacoast. This part of the County is one of the State's prime tourist destinations, with its stunning ocean vistas, thundering waves, many rivers and stately redwood forests. The weather is considered mild due to lack of temperature extremes, but the ocean-borne fog and wind often create a dramatic accompaniment to the charming inns and towns which dot the countryside. (Web: [www.littleriverinn.com](http://www.littleriverinn.com) for more information and photos.)

On Monday, we'll focus on two gardens with ample time in between for beachcombing at Van Damme State Park, relaxing at the Inn, or visiting the nearby Victorian village of Mendocino.

Mid-day we'll head to The Gardens at Harmony Woods, the home of ACS members Judy and Bob Mathey. The emphasis is on conifers and rhododendron, with over 300 specimens of each, but the Matheys are a small part of a vast array of plant material gracing over twenty beds. Water and stone are uniquely integrated into the landscape so that the bridge and waterfalls appear to have existed for ages. We will have lunch on the lawn, once again in the shadow of the giants. (Web: Google “Gardens at Harmony Woods” for articles and photos.)

Next we will visit the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, our third



ACS Reference Garden of the meeting. Perched on the sea cliffs of Fort Bragg, just north of the village of Mendocino, the Gardens were highlighted in *Conifer Quarterly* Summer 2014 . (Web: visit the ACS website.) On Tuesday, we'll begin with a visit to a pygmy forest, an oligotrophic plant community, dominated by severely dwarfed Bishop pine (*Pinus muricata*), Bolander pine (*Pinus contorta* ssp. *bolanderi*) and Mendocino cypress (*Cupressus goveniana* var. *pigmaea*), the latter two of which are endemic to the pygmy forests of California's North Coast. This forest has "natural bonsais", the product of complex ecological conditions associated with underlying marine terraces and their unusual soils. (Web: Google "pygmy forest Mendocino" for photos and information.) From the Pygmy Forest, we'll head to Golden Eye Winery in Philo, for lunch and a garden tour. Known for its award-winning Pinot Noir, the winery also has a lovely garden and, once again, we'll find ourselves in the giants' shadow. (Web: visit [www.goldeneywinery.com](http://www.goldeneywinery.com) for information about the wines and photos.)

After lunch we'll head inland, to a much harsher gardening environment, to Walt and Ginger Valen's Stoney Bottom Gardens in Boonville. Walt (the former Director of Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens in San Francisco) is a plant collector extraordinaire. He consistently pushes the limits of plants: too much sun, freezing valley temperatures,



Stoney Bottom Gardens  
Photo by Walt Valen

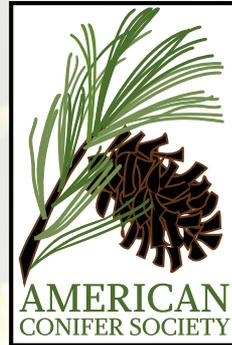
windy exposures, and the “reality” of growth rates and size have all played a role in the development of the gardens. Many conifers make their home there, alongside numerous other ornamental trees and specialty plants. (Web: Google “Stoney Bottom Gardens Boonville” for information and photos.)

Finally, we will arrive back at the DoubleTree, where you may catch the shuttle to SFO, stay the night and catch the shuttle in the morning, or stay the night and rent a car to continue your vacation! If you have driven to the meeting from your home, we will make sure that there is a secure place to leave your car while we are in Mendocino.

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# Important Information:

## 2015 National Meeting and Post Meeting Tour



- ▶ This meeting will be held later in the year than is typical. We chose September because it is the most reliable weather in coastal Northern California.
- ▶ Registration is open earlier in the year than is typical. We began receiving requests to book hotel rooms a year ahead of the meeting date and roughly half of the block has been booked at this writing, so we urge anyone who plans to attend to register for the meeting and book hotel rooms without delay.
- ▶ Our hotel is the DoubleTree by Hilton, Rohnert Park (707-584-5466) and you must make your hotel reservation yourself. Because we have seen such early demand for hotel rooms, we are poised to secure more if needed. If you cannot book a room at the meeting hotel at the preferred ACS rate of \$127, call/email Sara Malone at 707-486-0444, [webeditor@conifersociety.org](mailto:webeditor@conifersociety.org).
- ▶ Registration forms will NOT be mailed separately, as has been done in the past, in order to save the Society postage and printing costs. Registration forms are provided in this issue of the CQ and the next issue as well.
- ▶ We are using electronic communication whenever possible in order to save the Society money and volunteer hours, and

to be environmentally conscious. If you have not provided your email address, please send an email to Steve Courtney, ACS National Office Manager, at [acsnationaloffice@gmail.com](mailto:acsnationaloffice@gmail.com) so that he can add it to your record. The ACS respects the privacy of your email (and all of your personal information) and will never share it with others. Updates to the meeting schedule and additional information will be delivered via email and web postings.

- Our dinners will not be held at the hotel; they will be held at the Circle Oak Ranch, about 15 minutes away.
- The price of the post meeting tour does NOT include hotel rooms. This is different than in past, when it often did. You MUST make your hotel reservation yourself. Our hotel is the Little River Inn in Little River (707-937-5942—you must call; cannot book online). We have a preferred rate; mention the ACS when booking.
- The post meeting tour will include the optional activity of ziplining in a redwood forest for an additional cost (see registration form). No athletic prowess or special talent necessary, just no fear of heights and a desire to soar among the tree tops!

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# Growing *Abies* in Raleigh, NC: My First 7 Years' Experience

By Harrison Tuttle

**A**ccording to conventional wisdom, the only fir which will grow in North Carolina outside of the mountains is *Abies firma*.

Conventional wisdom also suggests that *Abies firma* is not a particularly attractive tree. About eight years ago, however, as I was trying to establish the most attractive landscape possible, it was clear that I needed to include *Abies* plants, if possible, and I could not find evidence, anecdotal or otherwise, which would verify these myths. Therefore, I decided to give it a go and, in 2007, began planting every *Abies* species I could get a hold of which I thought might have a chance in our hot, humid climate. In 2008, I began finding *Abies* grafted onto *Abies firma* and *nordmanniana* and I bought almost as many as I could find over the years. My interest in growing *Abies* has also led me to other notable gardens in the area where firs are growing. Thus, I now have gathered quite a bit of anecdotal experience about growing *Abies* in central North Carolina. The purpose of this article is to share my experience, to open up more discussion and trialing of *Abies*, and to motivate more growers to graft firs on *Abies firma* rootstock.

Raleigh certainly does not seem like a great place to grow firs. The soil is the traditional southern red mud: slick when wet, hard as a brick when dry, and drains poorly all the time. The weather is hot and humid, and the summers are long. We typically get long stretches, up to six weeks, during the summer, when the low temperatures do not dip below the low 70's. It is not rare to have months where the highs stay in the upper 90's to over 100. Summers usually last for four months with hot temperatures beginning no later than mid-May and lasting through mid-September. This climate is certainly not the cool dry mountain habitat where I think of firs thriving.

Nonetheless, the allure of firs is strong. No other genus offers the same bright green soft foliage with the sparkling silver undersides of the needles. *Keteleeria* comes close, but can't rival the beauty of *Abies* with its perfectly symmetrical form and tiered layers of branches. Then *Abies*

offers so many spectacular cultivars with weeping and pendulous forms and a broad range of green, yellow and blue hues. The cones of many firs are also particularly noteworthy; most have fragrant needles (when crushed); and some even have fantastic bark (e.g. *Abies squamata*). The desire to grow *Abies* is probably obvious to any member of the American Conifer Society.

Despite the climate and soil challenges, I remain surprised that there is not more available information about growing firs in the Southeast. There is a strong horticultural tradition in North Carolina with the mountains' Christmas tree industry and particularly in Raleigh, the home of North Carolina State University. The late NC State horticultural professor, JC Raulston, is credited with originating the idea of grafting firs onto *Abies firma* rootstock, but it is still extremely difficult to find even first-year grafts available for purchase in Raleigh or elsewhere in the Southeast. Eight years ago, even with limitless information and sharing of ideas on the Internet, I could find no specific information about the survival of any fir other than *Abies firma*. Even today, Tom Cox and John Ruter's recent excellent book, *Landscaping with Conifers and Ginkgo for the Southeast*, is the only publication I am aware of which discusses growing this genus with any degree of thoughtfulness.

My story begins in the spring of 2005 when my wife, two small kids and I moved to Raleigh for my work. After moving five times in nine years, we wanted to find our long-term home. We bought a house near downtown Raleigh on just under a half-acre lot which was covered in loblolly pines which had been haphazardly scattered across the backyard. These trees were messy, unattractive (in this setting) and their placement made it hard to throw balls and play games with the kids, and, as a result, we had them removed before we moved in August of 2005. I immediately went about correcting this insult to Mother Nature by planting trees in more suitable positions in my yard and did as much research as I could to find the best and most beautiful trees possible. The Internet was quite helpful, and I also discovered Michael Dirr's *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* in 2005. I read it cover to cover and searched long and hard to find trees like *Emmenopterys henryi*, *Davidia involu-crata*, *Stewartia monodelpha*, and *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata'. In 2005, since I had a long timeline, I was willing to start with some small trees, but I wasn't willing to take much risk on a tree's survival. For the first

several years of my yard, I did not include conifers since I was under the impression they would not do well.

In 2007, my family (now three kids) took a walk through nearby Duke Gardens. I was particularly impressed with a pendulous form of *Picea omorika* as well as a specimen of *Sequoia sempervirens* ‘Henderson Blue’, and the “game” in my yard suddenly changed. During the next several years, my “yard” transitioned to a “garden” as I included conifers. Other factors were also coming into play. My plants required quite a bit of water, and we were in the middle of a severe drought. Restrictions on irrigation were instituted in Raleigh, and, as a necessity, I had a well drilled in our yard so that I could irrigate as much as needed (all my woody plants are on drip irrigation). I also realized that these conifers, with which I had been fascinated, would benefit from better drainage. I began bringing in the first of what would be hundreds of cubic yards of specially mixed topsoil with 30% PermaTill to simulate Rocky Mountain soil the best I could. My wife was really patient with me as we seemed continually to have piles of topsoil in our driveway for a couple of years so that I could make elevated planting beds. The kids loved to climb these alluvial hills, spreading dirt everywhere, including inside the house. Finally, in 2010, my wife and I added a covered porch to the back of our house so that we could enjoy our “garden” (she still calls it our yard). I took the occasion of this renovation project to have stacked stone walls added to border the elevated beds and also to create stone walkways which would wander around the yard. Thus, a reasonably good setting for conifers was created.

In 2007, I began ordering seedlings of firs from China and the Mediterranean region, since these areas seemed to have heat similar to ours. Most of these species seemed pretty obscure, and I thought it was possible that they had not been grown here before. I did realize that JC Raulston had access to just about every plant in the world, but thought it was possible that he may have gotten distracted from experimenting with *Abies*. As mentioned above, I could certainly find no record or person who remembered his growing some of these obscure species. When my first *Abies* plants arrived, it turned out that some had been grafted (*Abies nebrodensis*, *Abies cilicica*) presumably onto *Abies balsamea* rootstock. I also bought an *Abies koreana* ‘Horstmanns Silberlocke’, beautifully grown in a three gallon container from a reputable grower, but

likely grafted onto *Abies balsamea*, as well. Each of these “heat tolerant” firs which had been grafted were dead by late June of 2007—consistent with conventional wisdom! I also bought *Abies bornmuelleriana*, *Abies x borisii-regis*, *Abies cephalonica*, *Abies homolepis*, *Abies koreana*, *Abies numidica*, *Abies chensiensis*, *Abies fabri*, *Abies delavayi*, all of which eventually died. During this period I also bought seedlings of *Abies firma*, *Abies recurvata* var. *ernestii*, *Abies pindrow* (2), *Abies holophylla*, and, a year later, *Abies nordmanniana*, all of which remain alive and appear to be quite healthy. I did lose an *Abies nordmanniana* and I also chose to remove a living *Abies sachalinensis* var. *mayriana*. It was a beautiful little tree, but it appeared to be struggling while my other seedlings appeared to be thriving. Impatience compelled me to yank it out after it had survived five summers. It also helped that I had one grafted onto *Abies firma* rootstock. My complete experience with these fir seedlings is summarized in *Table 1* at the end of this article.

Over the last 7 years, I have been able to make some observations about these plants. I realize that my experiment with these firs is far from scientific. First of

all, I bought only one of most of these firs, and I also had to rely on the seller for their true identity (it’s hard for me to distinguish young specimens of *Abies cephalonica* from *Abies holophylla*). The planting conditions also varied in terms of sun exposure, drainage and watering. Thus, my comments on these individual species are anecdotal. Nonetheless I am particularly impressed by *Abies recurvata* (*Figure 1*) and *Abies holophylla* (*Figure 2*). Both are growing vigorously and have added almost 1’ of growth each of the last two years. The *Abies recurvata* is particularly impressive since it was not planted in particularly special soil, and



Figure 1:  
*Abies recurvata* ‘Glauca Nana’

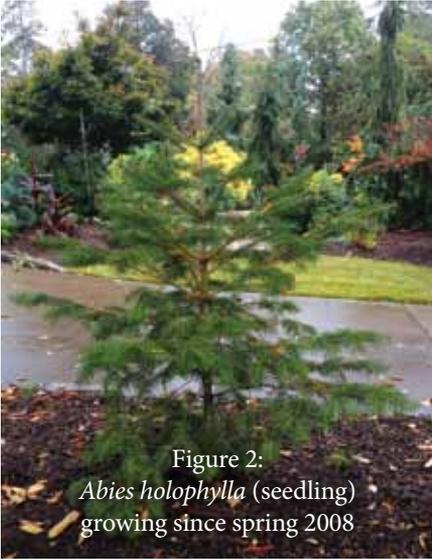


Figure 2:  
*Abies holophylla* (seedling)  
growing since spring 2008

its root zone has definitely extended into the native North Carolina clay. However, I'm not convinced that either of these plants offers much which visually distinguish it from *Abies firma*, but it is possible the whiter undersides of the *Abies holophylla* needles may make it more attractive. I have seen several very attractive older specimens of *Abies holophylla* at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. *Abies firma* (Figure 3) grows quite well for me and I find it can be a very attrac-

tive tree. I have read observations that it is more "open-growing" than other firs, and that the course needles are unattractive. In Raleigh, we are fortunate to have quite a few mature *Abies firma* trees planted around town and most have beautifully tiered dark green layered branches. While I also prefer the firs with shorter, softer fragrant needles with white undersides, from a distance, large healthy *Abies firma* specimen are gorgeous conifers.



Figure 3: *Abies firma*

*Abies nordmanniana* and *Abies bornmuelleriana* seem to be borderline here in Raleigh. There are some large specimens of *Abies nordmanniana* about 30 miles northeast of Raleigh in Hillsborough NC, and Tony Avent is growing a beautiful specimen (about fifteen years old) of *Abies bornmuelleriana* at Juniper Level Botanical Gardens at his Plant Delights

horticultural nursery about 15 miles southeast of Raleigh. I think these two species are particularly beautiful, but I have not had the greatest success with them. My one living *Abies nordmanniana* lost its leader last year, but still grew about 5" this year. It looks quite healthy, but I'm not confident that it's thriving yet.

On the other hand, I am excited about the prospects of *Abies pindrow*. I bought one of these in the fall of 2007 and thought it was so attractive that I bought another the following spring. The long light-green, soft needles are beautiful, and the branches are pendulous with up-growing tips. They are native to what I'm told is a very wet part of western China. So far, our moisture hasn't seemed to bother them as both of my seed-

lings seem to be quite healthy. I have one tree in mostly sun, and another in almost full shade, and both seem to be reasonably full in appearance. There does seem to be a question about the cold hardiness, but mine survived 8°F this past winter, and the specimen at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston is very healthy and has been growing for at least ten years.

While I was buying seedlings in 2007, I was also trying to find grafted firs which



Figure 4:  
*Abies magnifica* 'Nana'

might survive our heat. Since firs grafted onto *Abies firma* rootstock were so scarce, I experimented with other rootstock. I bought quite a few on *Abies nordmanniana* rootstock. My experience with firs grafted onto rootstock other than *Abies firma* is summarized in Table 2. Three of my most beautiful firs are grafted onto *Abies nordmanniana* rootstock. I have four firs which have survived at least six summers in my yard. My *Abies magnifica* 'Nana' (Figure 4) is probably the biggest surprise. This western North American fir is not one I would expect to do well here, but is full, colorful and grows at its expected rate of 3"– 4" per year. My *Abies nebrodensis* x *umbellata* ((*Abies homolepis* x *firma*) x *nebrodensis*) certainly should be heat tolerant given its parentage and has not disappointed. It is almost 6' tall, has the most luxuriant soft blunt dark green needles with bright silver undersides and grows 6"– 8" a year. Similarly, my *Abies pinsapo* 'Glauca', which was bought as a 2' 6" B&B plant in spring of 2009 looks great, grew 12" last year, and is now about 5' tall. Unfortunately, I have had more failures than successes on *Abies nordmanniana* rootstock, even with plants which should be heat tolerant. Again, see Table 2 for the full list of casualties, but I have lost three *Abies koreana* 'Horstmanns Silberlocke', an *Abies koreana* 'Aurea', an *Abies pinsapo* 'Aurea', an *Abies numidica* and an *Abies concolor* 'Blue Cloak' I thought would take our heat. I even bought several firs grafted onto *Abies koreana* rootstock. This reputable grower suggested that drainage was the key to success and that the Korean fir rootstock was heat tolerant. I planted all of them in perfectly draining soil, but all were dead by mid June of the year I received them. To their defense, however, these plants were all dwarfs which have also proven to be challenging even on *Abies firma*.

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TABLE 1			
SPECIES	ACQUIRED	APPROX. SIZE	NOTES/COMMENTS
<b>ALIVE</b>			
<i>Abies firma</i> (seedling)	Fall 2007	20 g (6 ft)	very attractive
<i>Abies firma</i> (seedling)	Spring 2011	20g	very attractive
<i>Abies holophylla</i> (seedling)	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	growing quickly (9 inch leader)
<i>Abies nordmanniana</i> (seedling)	Spring 2009	3 yr (12-15")	beautiful foliage, lost its leader last year
<i>Abies pindrow</i> (seedling)	Fall 2007	1-2 yr (8-12")	healthy, grows about 4"/year
<i>Abies pindrow</i> (seedling)	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	same growth rate, both are really beautiful little trees
<i>Abies recurvata</i> var. <i>ernestii</i> (seedling)	Fall 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	growing quickly (about 1 foot last year)
<b>DIED</b>			
<i>Abies x borisii-regis</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	lived 3 years in shady location before dying
<i>Abies bornmuelleriana</i>	Spring 2007	1-2 yr (8-12")	lived 2 years before dying, planted in good site (part sun, good drainage)
<i>Abies bornmuelleriana</i>	Spring 2009	3 yr (12-15")	lived 2 years before dying, planted in good site (part shade, good drainage)
<i>Abies cephalonica</i>	Spring 2007	1-2 yr (8-12")	died first summer, probably poorly sited
<i>Abies chensiensis</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	died during its first winter
<i>Abies concolor</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	died in container during first summer
<i>Abies delavayi</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	died in container during first summer
<i>Abies fabri</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	died in container during first summer
<i>Abies fargesii</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	died in container during first summer
<i>Abies homolepis</i>	Spring 2009	3 yr (12-15")	died first summer despite good siting
<i>Abies koreana</i>	Spring 2008	1-2 yr (8-12")	died in container during first summer
<i>Abies nordmanniana</i>	Spring 2009	3 yr (12-15")	died in container during 1st summer
<i>Abies numidica</i>	Fall 2007	1-2 yr (8-12")	not 100% sure of the species, but this plant lived 5 years in full sun, then suddenly died
<i>Abies sachalinensis</i> var. <i>mayriana</i>	Fall 2007	1-2 yr (8-12")	survived in container 2 years, then planted - lived 3 years in ground (1 inch/yr), removed (I got impatient)

TABLE 2			
SPECIES (ROOTSTOCK)	ACQUIRED/PLANTED	APPROX. SIZE	NOTES/COMMENTS
<b>ALIVE</b>			
<i>Abies homolepis</i> 'Tomomi' (2) ( <i>bommuelleriana</i> )	Fall 2014	1yr graft	just planted
<i>Abies magnifica</i> 'Nana' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	2g	lived 1 year in container, before planted - looks beautiful
<i>Abies nordmanniana</i> 'Golden Spreader' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2012	1g (2 yr graft?)	not the most healthy looking plant....but still young
<i>Abies pinsapo</i> 'Aurea' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2008	1g	beautiful
<i>Abies pinsapo</i> 'Glauca' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	B&B (2.5')	healthy and growing quickly now (leader > 1 foot)
<i>Abies procera</i> 'Glauca Prostrata' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2012	3d year graft	looks fine
<i>Abies nebrodensis</i> x <i>umbellata</i> ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2008	3g	beautiful and healthy
<b>DIED</b>			
<i>Abies alba</i> 'Green Spiral' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	7g	removed - too big too transplant, looked healthy, lived 2 yrs in ground
<i>Abies concolor</i> 'Blue Cloak' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	2g	died during first summer despite excellent conditions
<i>Abies cilicica</i> (? <i>balsamea</i> )	Spring 2007	1g	thought this was a seedling when I ordered it
<i>Abies fraseri</i> 'Fastigiata Compacta' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	1g	died during second summer in ground
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Aurea' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2008	1g	died in container
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Aurea' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	B&B (2.5')	suspect rootball split was cause of demise
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Kohouts Icebreaker' ( <i>koreana</i> )	Spring 2010	1yr graft	died within a month of receiving
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Horstmanns Silberlocke' (? <i>balsamea</i> )	Fall 2007	3g	died first July
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Silberlocke' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2008	1g	languished and eventually died after 3 years in ground (too much shade?)
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Silberlocke' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	B&B (2.5')	died first summer despite excellent growing conditions
<i>Abies koreana</i> 'Silberlocke' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Spring 2009	B&B (2.5')	died first summer despite excellent growing conditions
<i>Abies nebrodensis</i> (? <i>balsamea</i> )	Spring 2007	1g	thought this was a seedling when I ordered it
<i>Abies nordmanniana</i> 'Golden Spreader' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2012	1g (2 yr graft?)	died first summer despite excellent conditions
<i>Abies numidica</i> ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2009	5g	same result with this plant too
<i>Abies pinsapo</i> 'Aurea' ( <i>nordmanniana</i> )	Fall 2008	1g	died in container
<i>Abies veitchii</i> ( <i>koreana</i> )	Spring 2010	1 yr graft	died within a month of receiving
<i>Abies beitchii</i> 'Rumburk' ( <i>koreana</i> )	Spring 2010	1 yr graft	died within a month of receiving

# ACS Conifer & Fall Color Tour

By Dennis Groh • Photos by John Jacob Vrablic and Ron Elardo

A fall color and conifer rendezvous was an idea to try something different. Fall weather can be a challenge and, since it hadn't been done before in the Central Region, the big concern was we could give a party and no one would come.

It was agreed upon by the garden hosts to do a two-day event over a weekend. This was an added burden for the hosts, but seemed to be a key success factor in encouraging attendance. The two days accommodated all the various scheduling issues of visitors and permitted individuals to travel long distances over the weekend and still see all six gardens.

The intent was to provide an opportunity for ACS members to visit conifer gardens in another season and, via publicity, to entice non-members to join the ACS in order to gain access to the rendezvous. Each ACS member was allowed the opportunity to bring one guest in the hope the event would be impressive enough to get the guests to join the ACS after the fact.

As it turned out, the response was far beyond our wildest dreams. Visitors had to register with the National Office to gain access to the tour venue information. Members also had to register their guests. Steve Courtney said 173 registered from 7 different states. Of those, 27 were new members. Several of the ACS member's guests picked up applications to join, so there could be a few more new members.

In spite of colder than normal weather for this time of year, the visitors came dressed for the challenge. They were enthusiastic and eager to learn. A lot of information was exchanged. Old friends were greeted and new friendships were made. The plant lovers were in all their glory as each garden had something different and unusual for them to enjoy and salivate over. There was a lot of interest in the seasonal companion plants for conifers. Individuals drove independently and were visiting the gardens in the sequence which was best for them. This format encouraged many side conversations describing what special attractions were waiting ahead as they progressed on their tour.

The event showed how effectively fall color could be enhanced with conifers as partner plantings. Albert Camus once said: "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower." It only gets better mixed in with conifers. All parties, including the hosts thought the Fall Color and Conifer Rendezvous was a huge success.



*Wild Garden*





*Groh Garden*





*Toth Garden*





*Iuppenlatz Garden*





*Partridge Garden*





*LaFond Garden*



# The Neglected Conifer

By John W. Abbuhl

The land of the Pine Hollow Arboretum was purchased with my home in the spring of 1966. The first significant landscaping began in 1967 with the construction of a single pond.

**T**his was followed by several plantings with no firm goal of creating an arboretum. After ten years of familiarizing myself with the landscape, or what I call “reading the land”, I constructed several more ponds and acquired additional land. Throughout this time, a distinguishable pattern of horticultural development took hold and initiated the establishment of the Pine Hollow Arboretum as a long-term goal.

Approximately half of the property is a white pine successional forest which replaced abandoned farm fields after World War I. Many of those trees are approaching 100' and 100 years old. The forest is undergoing the natural succession to oak, maple, elm, ash, beech and hickory.

An integral part of my collection policy is establishing and maintaining regionalized planting areas. I believe that regionalizing plantings



according to their origin provides visitors with a great deal of insight into the world's most captivating tree species. With the addition of new plantings, I aim to obtain as wide a diversity as possible so that the arboretum's collection is representative of tree species from several continents. Provided that the conditions of our local region are appropriate, trees originating from all across the world can thrive in our ecologically managed property.

The construction of several ponds has provided additional soil for various landscape features allowing for

distinct planting regions. A Japanese Hill, characterized by specimens from Japan, was created in this way. The Oriental Glade connects to the Japanese Hill and continues into the Chinese Strip, the Russian Pond and Hill and the ridge-top fir trail.

*Thujopsis dolabrata*, hiba, or false arborvitae, is native to Japan and has, therefore, been established in the Japanese Hill area of the property. It is in the family of Cupressaceae, closely related to the genus *Thuja*. Fossil

records date back ten million years.

These trees can grow to 30m. Growth is slow in youth and requires moisture and high humidity. There are only a few cultivars with the most prominent being 'Nana', 'Variegata' and 'Altissima', a faster growing columnar form.

Pine Hollow's first *Thujopsis dolabrata* specimen was planted in 1993. Of the seven original plantings, five remain. The first specimen came from the private herbarium of Dick Southwick, a retired Cobleskill professor. This specimen was variegated (*Thujopsis dolabrata* 'Variegata') and



thought to be a dwarf selection. Our other specimens have all come from the Forest Farm Nursery in Williams, Oregon.

The *Thujaopsis dolabrata* 'Variegata' has proven to be the most significant of our *Thujaopsis* plantings. It was planted at the edge of a wet field and receives no direct light past noon. Growth has been very slow for the first ten years, but it has now developed a distinguishable vertical central leader, with an estimated growth rate of 6" per year for five years. This type of growth certainly seems to suggest true tree formation.

The second *Thujaopsis dolabrata* specimen was planted in 2001 in a drier, sunny location. After ten years of slow growth to a height of 3', the plant died at the end of a drought. Another specimen planted in the same location in 2009 died within one year. Two other specimens planted in 2009 have grown very slowly. I have since transplanted the one in a drier location to a shaded moist area. A specimen planted in 2012 was shaded by high grass and was in a moister area receiving only afternoon direct light. This is growing vigorously and has doubled in height in two years. The most recent specimen planted in spring 2014 was *Thujaopsis dolabrata* 'Aurea'. It was placed in full shade with moist soil. My initial observations have indicated that it is establishing quite well.

The hiba, or false arborvitae, is a beautiful distinctive evergreen deserving of more attention. It should be planted in well-drained, moist soil and will do well in half sun. The most critical factor, which I have concluded from my personal experience, is access to moisture. It fulfills the requirements for dwarf plantings as well as having potential for significant tree forms. Any lover of conifers would like to have one, but many do not, hence the title "the neglected conifer".

**NOTE:** The ArbNet Arboretum Association Program and the Morton Arboretum have awarded Pine Hollow Arboretum Level 1 Accreditation. This award recognizes professional practices important for arboreta and botanic gardens. Pine Hollow is now an accredited arboretum in The Morton Register of Arboreta.



# Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens

Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens is the inspiration of two partners, Paul Surian and Bill Snyder.

**P**aul is a veteran nurseryman with twenty-five years of experience in the trade. He graduated from the landscape nursery program at Michigan State University and is the nursery's head propagator. Bill enjoyed a 27 year career as a scientist in the pharmaceutical industry before retiring to work at Blue Horizon. He received his undergraduate degree at the Johns Hopkins University and later his doctorate at the University of Illinois, specializing in the biosynthesis of natural products. The two joined forces to create a special nursery where visitors can relax and enjoy rare and unusual plants in a natural setting.

The name Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens was inspired in part by the 1937 Frank Capra movie classic, *Lost Horizon*. In that movie, Shangri-La is the mythical paradise, where nature exists in perfect

harmony with man. Paul and Bill set out on their quest with a large tract of forested land. They want visitors to enjoy the plants and see the way they are cared for.

Blue Horizon is located near the shores of Lake Michigan, surrounded by orchards, vineyards and blueberry farms and is less than 10 minutes from South Haven, Michigan. The nursery is nestled on a 56-acre parcel of land with a large pond and over 10 acres of native wetlands.

The nursery occupies only a few acres while the balance of the land remains in its natural state. Walking paths are being installed to allow visitors to access the forested areas. Blue herons frequent the pond and Canada geese foster their brood on the island. Wildlife abounds in the wetlands. Visitors on the paths may encounter white tail deer, owls, foxes, coyotes and other inhabitants of the forest.



Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens is not just a commercial enterprise. It is a blend between commerce and a natural retreat which serves as an escape where guests can appreciate the beauty of nature. The understory of the forest is a kaleidoscope of change, as various ferns and flowers make their show. Visitors will enjoy lady's slipper orchids amidst the club mosses and ferns abundant throughout the woods.



Tree frog hanging out at Blue Horizon Nursery

A host of small creatures call the nursery home including toads and frogs, turtles, tortoises and salamanders.

In keeping with a natural preserve, we created simple signs made of cedar to blend into the landscape. Restrooms are similar to those in National Parks, and trails are rustic.



Restrooms at Blue Horizon Nursery



Winter flats of 'Copper Harbor' juniper in greenhouse



Re-purposed marble from the Japanese reflecting ponds of the former international headquarters of the Upjohn Company forms the steps of our cold frame. The nursery's use of reclaimed materials showing the wear and tear of age is inspired by the Japanese philosophy of *wabi-sabi*. We hope that visitors will find these elements and the natural setting conducive to inner calm and introspective thought.

We are collectors seeking out new and unusual plants. We have introduced *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Copper Harbor', a natural mutation discovered on a Bar Harbor juniper. 'Copper Harbor', available nowhere else in the world, is brilliant gold in summer deepening to a metallic copper in winter. Other introductions include a red pine, *Pinus resinosa* 'Monastery Gold' and an unusual juniper cultivar, *Juniperus x media* 'Blue Chiffon'. We are evaluating other prospective introductions.

Rare and unusual plants, with an emphasis on conifers, form the heart of Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens. Visitors are welcome to wander the display gardens and other landscaped areas for inspiration.

Blue Horizon Nursery offers the choicest selections of rare trees and ornamental shrubs including dwarf and miniature conifers, ginkgoes and dogwoods. It has one of the area's largest selections of Japanese maples.

Blue Horizon Nursery and Gardens is not only a nursery, but also an escape to a paradise found.

Paul Surian and Bill Snyder





# American Conifer Society Northeast Regional Meeting

**“The Main Line,” Philadelphia, PA,  
August 14, 15 and 16, 2015**

No matter what anyone says, greater Philadelphia is where “Horticulture is KING”. There is more to see in a 50 mile radius than any other location in the United States.

This summer (August 14, 15, 16) we will tour **Chanticleer**, the **Morris Arboretum**, and a super outstanding residence. There is much to see, and to do that it is hard to narrow it down—pre and post sites galore! Bill Wells is the tour coordinator, and Bill Thomas is the keynote speaker.

## CHANTICLEER

BY FRAN DIMARCO

**E**njoy a morning walk through Chanticleer, a 35-acre, pleasure garden in Wayne, Pennsylvania. Considered one of the most visually exciting, imaginative, and romantic public gardens in the U.S., Chanticleer recently celebrated its centennial as an estate and its 20th anniversary as a public garden.

The garden’s design combines contemporary plantings within an historic setting. Magnificent trees, staff-made furniture, and decorative features add to the overall effect. Chanticleer’s Executive Director is a life-member and former president of the American Conifer Society, and the garden includes 87 conifer species and 31 genera, representing 8 families. At Chanticleer, guests will be served a light breakfast of refreshments and coffee.



*Pinus palustris*

## Longleaf Pine: ACS, Conifer Conservation and Restoration

By Larry Nau

The longleaf pine, *Pinus palustris*, once dominated the landscape from Virginia to east Texas, covering an estimated area of over 90 million acres.

**W**ith the arrival of the British explorers in 1607 and their subsequent exploitation and destruction of the longleaf pine forests, this tree virtually disappeared in many areas. In cultivation, *Pinus palustris* has no registered cultivars and is, therefore, seldom grown by ACS members. However, the tree has many desirable attributes, particularly in the “grass stage”. The species features 8” to 20” needles, with 6” to 10” cones. The tree itself grows to a height of 130’. Longleaf pine is an imperiled species, and the American Conifer Society has made its first contribution toward the re-establishment of this historic and important conifer.

When John Smith and other British explorers arrived in 1607, they were searching for gold and silver in Virginia. They did not find gold, but they did find another valuable resource, the longleaf pine. From the longleaf pine came naval store products such as pitch, tar and turpentine which were then sent to England. Since England was quickly becoming the dominant naval power of that era, these products were critically important to their growing fleet.

Soon the naval store industry was exerting a huge toll on the longleaf pine forests through the destructive harvest of pine resin. Next, the trees were logged. The longleaf has exceptional straightness and strength in its timber, which was highly prized in the booming ship building industry and for construction by the colonists pouring into the American Southeast. The forests were eliminated so that agricultural crops could be planted to support the growing human population. Forest regeneration was stifled by the presence of feral hogs which fed on the roots of the longleaf seedlings. Lastly, fire was suppressed, which is a critical component of the longleaf's growth and development.

In Virginia alone, it's estimated that by 1850 more than one million acres of longleaf pine forest had disappeared. Today there are fewer than 2,000 mature *Pinus palustris* remaining in the natural forests of Virginia. *Pinus palustris* has been eliminated from its northern most range in the USA.

Longleaf pine forests are an important component of the ecology of the American Southeast. It is a keystone species and mediates fire effects which provide habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species including bobwhite quail, red-cockaded woodpeckers and Bachman's sparrows. Since the forests often contain seepage bogs and flatwoods, Mabee's salamanders, pitcher



## Longleaf seedlings



plants and sundews can be found. Species of orchids, lilies, wildflowers and sedges also proliferate. Longleaf pine can live for more than 300 years. As a result, they may be most helpful for long-term carbon sequestration. The utilization of carbon is not only good for the Southeast, but our entire planet.

There are many efforts directed toward the restoration of the *Pinus palustris*. The federal government, numerous environmental groups and even private landowners have partnered to replant the longleaf pine. One such effort is located in Virginia's Sussex County at the 232 acre Joseph Pines Preserve (JPP). Inside the Joseph Pines Preserve, over 60 acres of land have been cleared and burned to plant over 10,000 native, Virginia longleaf pine trees. Seed was collected from the last longleaf pine trees in Virginia. These seedlings were raised in Woodford, Virginia. In addition, the goal of the Joseph Pines is to restore the biodiversity of the yellow pitcher plant, *Sarracenia flava*, to the traditional longleaf pine – pitcher plant ecosystem. The preserve is also dedicated to capturing the entire Virginia longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) genome by grafting, fascicle rooting, or seed propagation. Joseph Pines Preserve has recently purchased an adjoining property to create The Center for Biodiversity. This facility will serve as an education and training center



*Sarracenia flava*

and will support conservation and restoration efforts.

At the 2014 Board of Director's Meeting in Atlanta, the ACS Board approved a donation of \$1,000 to the Joseph Pines Preserve from the ACS Endowment Fund. These funds will assist JPP's efforts to propagate, replant and preserve the native Virginia longleaf pine. This donation marks the first time the ACS has actively supported an effort to conserve conifers in the wild. Thank you to the Board as the ACS fulfills another important aspect of its mission.

As ACS Past President, I am working with Dr. Phil Sheridan of Meadowview Biological Research Station to offer another opportunity for the ACS members personally to assist with the restoration of the Virginia longleaf pine at JPP. In March or April of 2015, JPP will be planting another 1,000 *Pinus palustris*, and you can help to plant these young trees. It is impossible to predict what the winter of 2014/2015 will be like and when the ground will be suitable for planting. Therefore, look for updates on the ACS website starting in February 2015. Interested ACS members can also contact me directly by email at [lnau@frontiernet.net](mailto:lnau@frontiernet.net) or his cell 585-202-1815. We hope not only to plant these 1,000 trees, but also to have some time to learn about this unique and fragile ecosystem. Join us in restoring the Virginia longleaf pine to its most northern habitat.



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*Pinus flexilis* on Sandia Crest, New Mexico.  
Photo by David Rasch. Note the upward  
sweep of the snow.