



conifer

AMERICAN CONIFER SOCIETY | CONIFERQUARTERLY | Volume 37, Number 1/WINTER 2020

Winter 2020

Volume 37, Number 1

CONIFERQUARTERLY (ISSN 8755-0490) is published quarterly by the American Conifer Society. The Society is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is tax exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

You are invited to join our Society. Please address membership and other inquiries to: the American Conifer Society National Office, PO Box 1583, Maple Grove, MN 55311, nationaloffice@gmail.com, or join on our website at conifersociety.org.
Membership: US & Canada \$40, International \$60 (indiv.), \$30 (institutional), \$75 (sustaining), \$100 (corporate business) and \$150 (patron).

If you are moving, please notify the National Office 4 weeks in advance.

All editorial and advertising matters should be sent to: Ron Elardo, 5749 Hunter Ct., Adrian, MI 49221-2471, or email conquarteditor@gmail.com

Copyright © 2020, American Conifer Society. All rights reserved. No material contained herein may be reproduced in any form without prior written permission of the publisher. Opinions expressed by authors and advertisers are not necessarily those of the Society.

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

CONIFER QUARTERLY

Editor

Dr. Ronald J. Elardo

CQ Committee

Steven Courtney

Sara Malone

David Olszyk, Chair

Cover Photo

Pinus strobus sp.,

Adrian, MI.

Photo by Ron Elardo.

Inside Cover Photo

Picea abies 'Cranstonii', Peter's Opus,
Sherman, CT.

Photo by Susan Manning.

Back Cover Photo

Pinus sylvestris 'van Kempen's Visit'

Close up of the witch's broom.

Silverton, OR.

Photo by Sam Pratt.

Design and Layout

Chester Hundrieser

behance.net/chundrieserdesigner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 ACS President's Message**
David Olszyk
- 5 Mistakes of a New Plant Collector**
Bill Blevins
- 8 The Wonderful Woody Wish-book**
Dave Eckert
- 10 Vancouver's Ancient Forest**
Jack Christiansen
- 13 Joe Stupka, Broom Hunter**
Glenn Herold
- 18 *Cryptomeria japonica***
Jack Ayers
- 24 Northeast Region Conference**
Christie Dustman
- 28 ACS Bylaws Amendments**
Byron Baxter and Sandra Horn
- 30 How Do I Begin?**
Mary Warren

Thanks For A Great Year!

David Olszyk

Hi members! Those of us in most of the country have made it to the end of another gardening season. (Californians and Floridians, you can just keep on gardening!) I hope that your plants thrived, and your collections grew. I had the distinct honor to be able to attend each of the four regional conferences in 2019 and intend to do so again in 2020. Special mention goes to the Southeast Region who hosted their conference at Brent and Becky Heath's bulb farm in Virginia. Such a beautiful venue and a unique opportunity to slurp oysters on the banks of a Chesapeake Bay inlet – bucket list kind of stuff! Many people I know define friends as “those with whom they've broken bread”. Applying this definition, I have many new friends after this year! Our nickname of “Earth's coolest plant society” is safe from challenge.

Based on forecasts, 2020 will only be better. By now, registration for the 2020 National Convention, hosted by the Central Region, should be open. Highlights for the event include a lunchtime riverboat cruise on the mighty Mississippi, a riverside conference hotel with its own casino (a chance to win more cash for the auctions), and a Conifer College staffed with some of the leading experts in the field of conifer growing. I can't wait!

The regions seem to be trying to outdo each other with creativity. Southeast Region's 2020 conference will be in western North Carolina, at the foot of the Appalachians, the Northeast is planning theirs near historic downtown Boston, and the West is reviving the ever-popular Conifer Road Trip, this time out of Santa Fe,

NM – breaking new ground for the ACS. Stay up to date by visiting the ACS website. We'll post event details as we receive them.

I guess if there's an overriding message here, it's this: plan your vacations and adventures with the ACS in mind. You won't be disappointed, and you'll only grow from it. If I may quote Mark Twain:

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.

A little housekeeping...

The website keeps improving. The Conversations feature is front and center on the home page. Got a question? Want to say hi? Want to know what conifer works where? Post your questions! We have a small, but dedicated, group of volunteers who will answer directly or find an expert.

By now a major upgrade should be in place – the ability to create custom membership lists based on any number of criteria, always up to date, always relevant. Planning a road trip and want to visit members' gardens? This is your powerful new tool. Thanks to our Board of Directors for approving the funds to make this happen. In this issue, you'll find a page of proposed changes to the ACS bylaws. Our bylaws are similar to the U.S. Constitution. By design, they are very tedious and difficult to change. While I don't think this is a

bad thing, our steering documents simply must be brought up to modern reality. At the moment, the only means of amending our bylaws is through a vote of the membership in attendance at the National Membership meeting, and only after receiving at least 60 days' notice. Your notice is within the pages of this issue of the *Conifer Quarterly*, and you'll get your opportunity to vote them into reality this June in Clinton, IA.

Time to get back to work. The 2020 cycle starts fresh with the winter board meeting in Nashville, TN, in February. I hope to interact with as many of you as possible either at events or over any of our other means of communication. Take care and happy conifering!



David Olszyk, ACS President.
Photo by Anita Olszyk.

Mistakes of a New Plant Collector

Text and Photography Bill Blevins



Picea abies f. *pendula* (pendulous form of Norway spruce)

I planted a *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (dawn redwood) seedling in my Rochester, NY, backyard in 2007. My garden sported, at the time, dozens of other, newly-planted perennials, annuals, vegetables, and trees, but the dawn redwood made an impression on me. It grew fast and was uniformly shaped like a pyramid, with no help from pruning. I learned that it was one of only a few deciduous conifers. Dawn redwoods have an interesting history, too, and, as a result, I thought it was just perfect. That plant became my tree, and I became a conifer collector.

A few years later, my wife, Tracy, and I moved to Spotsylvania, VA. We bought a house on a two acre lot in a new subdivision. The building contractor had planted an ornamental plum tree in front of the house, along with three azaleas, four nandinas, and a holly as foundation plantings in a row below the front porch.

The front yard was in full sun, with hard-packed, fill dirt that had been bulldozed smooth, and covered with a layer of straw and grass seed.

Tracy started her new shade garden in the backyard, filling the edge of the woods with her favorite plants, such as hostas, pulmonarias, hydrangeas, viburnum, and many uncommon native trees. Whenever we went plant shopping, I kept my eye open for unusual conifers.

One day I said: "Since you're gardening in the back, I'll handle the front." She agreed.

I began planting conifers in 2013 – a lot of them. Since then, I have planted hundreds of other trees and plants in *my part* of the yard. Today, I would guess that our garden contains about 1,800 taxa.

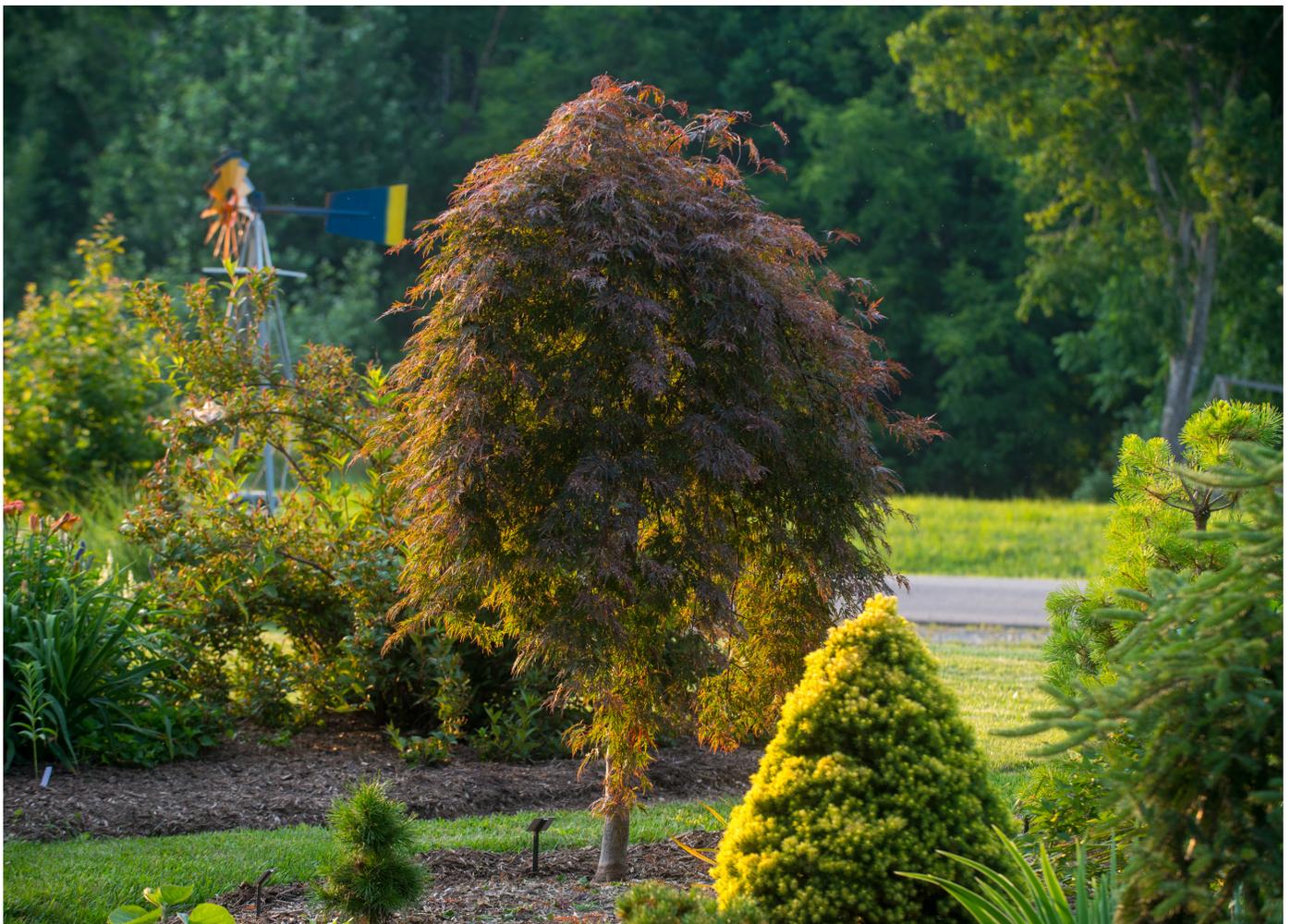
Here are some things I have learned as a new plant collector:

1. If you don't have irrigation, locate plants that need a lot of water close to the house.
2. The height, width, and spacing sizes printed on plant labels are an approximation.
(Here is a tip: Attend your regional American Conifer Society meeting for the conifer tours. Also, the ACS Conifer Reference Gardens are a good way to see how big conifers might ultimately get in your yard.)
3. Many botanical names and most family name printed on plant labels are either misspelled, or just wrong.
4. Home improvement big-box stores display and sell lots of plants that are not hardy in the zone where the store is located.
5. Once Japanese beetles find a plant they like, that plant is doomed to look bad 10 months of the year.

6. Roses are best planted in the yard of someone else.
7. Daylilies do not ever look good as a border plant.
8. Make drainage a top priority when planting conifers.
9. Educate yourself about rootstocks suitable for your zone before you buy grafted conifers.
10. Thoroughly check and try to fix the roots on every conifer that you plant.

I could probably list another dozen things that I've learned and that I could write a book about for each point above, but, after the heat and lack of rain at my house this summer, I've got to make some changes.

I spend 75% of the time in my garden holding a hose. Due to the soil type and the layout of the beds, an irrigation system is not an option. It takes at least six hours to water my part of the yard with a hose. This year, I've had to water my plants at least once a week.



Acer palmatum 'Orangeola' (Orangeola lace-leaf Japanese maple) and *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* 'Gold Tip' (gold-tipped Alberta spruce) in the front yard of the Garden of Bill and Tracy Blevins, Spotsylvania, PA.

I water some areas in my garden two or three times per week.

Here is a shortlist of things I've learned while watering:

1. Watering every other day lets me see every plant frequently. I'm not expert enough yet to be able to solve the problems I find, but I can spot them early. I've mastered finding sawfly eggs and I was successful at getting ahead of them this year before they ate my conifers.
2. Another good thing about spending so much time with each plant is that I can make minor pruning cuts regularly, rather than being surprised and needing to make a major cut.
3. That's about it for the benefits. Navigating three carts with a couple hundred feet of hoses through trees and around beds, while constantly disconnecting and reconnecting them, is a real pain.
4. Newly planted conifers initially require more water and, as a result, I've started planting annuals near them to remind me to keep them watered.
5. Once established, conifers do not require a lot of water.

I mentioned that I initially followed the suggested spacing that is printed on my plant labels. I quickly learned that those are normally wrong for my yard. Consequently, I started to spread out my conifers when planting, which led to another problem. I suddenly had more space between my conifers to plant something else and, so, I did.

Those unusual and interesting filler plants are what I'm constantly watering, and they also require the most hands-on maintenance!

I've figured out that it is not conifers that require work. It's all of the other plants!

After six years, I've started relocating plants to make being out in the yard more enjoyable. Conifers are being spaced out appropriate to their real, eventual, and mature size. I'm starting to accumulate pollinator plants in one place. Milkweed for the Monarch butterflies grows where I can easily mow around the bed. Lower-maintenance, ornamental grasses and bulbs are filling in the new, empty spaces between the conifers.

Hopefully, after another five years, I'll be spending a couple of hours every other day enjoying my plants, while holding a glass of wine, rather than the end of a hose.

Or, maybe it will just rain.

Favorite Conifers

- *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* 'Gold Rush'
(Gold Rush dawn redwood)
- *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Curly Tops'
(Curly Tops sawara cypress)
- *Pinus mugo* 'Dolly's Choice'
(Dolly's Choice mugo pine)
- *Abies balsamea* 'Weeping Larry'
(Weeping Larry balsam fir)
- *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Radicans'
(Radicans Japanese cedar)

Conifers I Can't Grow

- *Larix* spp. (larch)
- *Abies koreana* (Korean fir)
- *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine) cultivars
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* (Hinoki cypress)
- *Tsuga* spp. (hemlock)

Plants I will Never Grow Again

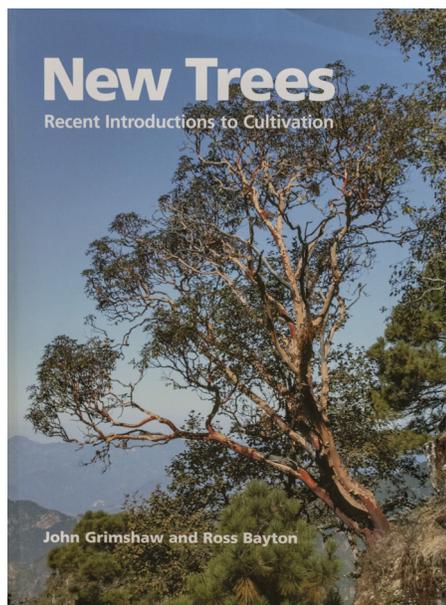
- *Passiflora incarnata* (purple passionflower)
- Pole beans
- Roses
- Iris
- Conifers from seed

Fun, But Not Conifers

- *Aralia spinosa* (devil's walking stick)
- *Aralia cordata* 'Sun King'
(Sun King Japanese spikenard)
- *Tulipa sylvestris* (wild tulip)
- *Athyrium filix-femina* 'Godzilla' (Godzilla lady fern)
- *Oenothera glazioviana* 'Tina James'
(Tina James red-sepal evening primrose)

The Wonderful Woody Wish-book

Text and Photography Dave Eckert



Book jacket of *New Trees*.

An acquaintance remarked that her greatest joy in visiting gardens was the opportunity to view and assess the compositional creativity of each gardener since, she said, we are all limited to using the same plant palette. I strongly disagree with this premise. While arrangement is rewarding, I find acquisition to be the most awesome and challenging aspect of gardening. If I can find and focus upon a superior selection, I will savor its singular beauty even though it may be sited beside a questionable thistle. Rather than maintaining a discrete distance from plant strangers, I am drawn to those I have never met. I want to ask, "Won't you be my neighbor? Please come and live in my garden!"

In my early days, the only "book" in our house was the Sears Roebuck catalog. It was a colossal collection of consumable choices for customers with copious cash.

It was my wish-book. Today, I have another book to inspire desire: *New Trees: Recent Introductions to Cultivation* by John Grimshaw and Ross Bayton (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2009, commissioned by the International Dendrology Society). It is a prospectus of over 800 possibilities, each introduced into cultivation relatively recently.

Two dozen pages shy of 1,000, this tome comes with a sewn-in ribbon page marker. I have supplemented this thoughtful inclusion with quantities of holiday-colored post-it flags indicating my haves (green) and my must-haves (red). *New Trees* is not a literary work that asks to be read in page-order, front to back, but, rather, is a collected work of *arboreal poetry* to be opened and enjoyed wherever the pages fall. It is a rigorous reference work with detailed dendrological descriptions of each qualifying genus and species. The requisite fine print is substantially supplemented with paragraphs and photographs reflecting the co-authors' knowledge and excitement of the new and the possible. It is a guide to help me appreciate the special trees I live with now and those that I would like to know better.

Green Flags

Carpinus fangiana (Fang hornbeam) is "[o]ne of the most attractive of recently introduced trees and should be widely planted." I first saw Fang hornbeam as an image on the dust cover of *The Jade Garden*:

New and Notable Plants from Asia by Brent Hine, Douglas Justice, and Peter Wharton (Workman Publishing, 2005). Pendulous, white-cigar length braids of flowers were set off beautifully against crisp, artfully textured, deep-green leaves. I would have purchased the book for the jacket alone. I saw this plant in full flower at the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden in Vancouver a decade ago and had conducted a futile search for it ever since. At a plant club meeting a few months ago, two plantsmen, knowing of my quest,



Cupressus vietnamensis 'Aurea'.

gifted me with a spectacular specimen. Plants and friendship are truly symbiotic.

Huodendron tibeticum (Tibetan huodendron) bloomed for us shortly after being planted out of its one-gallon, plastic pot. The glossy evergreen leaves seem to enjoy full sun and are joined in spring by new foliage, emerging copper-colored. Although a member of the family Styracaceae, the plentiful white flowers are unlike any borne by the several *Styrax* species we grow.

John Grimshaw writes: "The introduction of another species of *Parrotia* (ironwood) to western gardens is an exciting event." Color me excited! As autumn arrives, *Parrotia subequalis* (Chinese ironwood), a Chinese species, rewards us with the most brilliant colors in our garden. Dark-green leaves quickly become maroon and then further transition into a spectrum of reds and purples. Planted in full sun with its cousins *Parrotia persica* (Persian ironwood) and the variegated *Parrotia persica* 'Persian Lace', it highlights this awesome threesome.

Cupressus vietnamensis (Vietnam cypress) was only first described in 2002. It is a "new" conifer, the first since the *Wollemia nobilis* (Wollemi pine) was discovered in 1994. Both trees are critically endangered in their natural habitat with fewer than 1,000 Vietnam cypress surviving. One goal of threatened species conservation programs is to establish new populations *ex-situ* in public and private gardens. Just 16 years after being identified, we

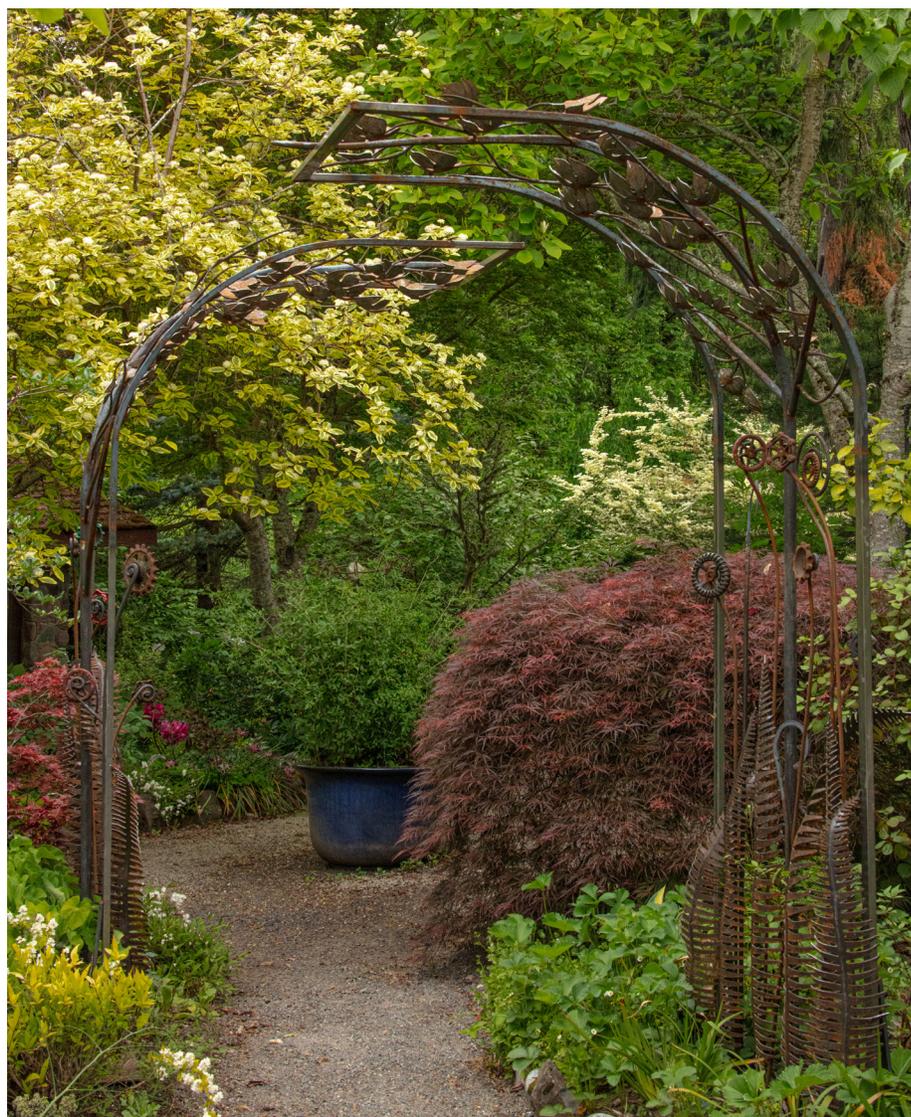
are pleased to have this very young tree in our garden. The golden Vietnam cypress (*Cupressus vietnamensis* 'Aurea') is a small tree with plagiotropic sprays. The juvenile foliage is light and airy, while the mature foliage is cedar-like, both appearing together on the plant.

A Red Flag

John Grimshaw writes of *Quercus rysophylla* (loquat leaf oak): "If only one 'new tree' were to be grown, this should perhaps be it." Pat and I grow a dozen or so *Quercus* species and we would welcome a *Q. rysophylla*

as a new member of our garden family. A species of red oak native to Mexico, it has bold dramatic evergreen foliage that flushes a strong red twice each year. Although rare in nature, *Q. rysophylla* is said to be "regularly offered by the nursery trade as grafted specimens". So where is ours? We are on the hunt!

I found my path late in life, and it was a garden path. Thanks to the plant explorers, the researchers, the propagators, and the nurserymen, my path will be bordered with beauty and joy and wonder.



The garden path at the Eckert home.

A Visit to Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and its Ancient Forest

Text and Photography Jack Christiansen

It was an overcast, cool morning that met us as we got out of our car on Vancouver Island. We wondered what the trail ahead of us would reveal. We had arrived days before and had heard of the magnificent trees on the flanks of the Island's upper mountains, just south of where we were. Being enthusiasts of the giant trees in our home state of California, we wondered what was in store for us that morning, here, on what is called a *paradisiacal, forested island*.

As we started our walk to the trailhead, we saw a sign that stated that we were entering Cathedral Grove, located in MacMillan Provincial Park. The next sign had a warning, though. If high winds were to come up, we were to leave immediately! Those words caused us concern and made us wonder what we were about to experience. There were other people ahead of us, and so we ventured on, taking in the high-towering trees that created an entrance. This place was like a dark, haunting rain forest.

Ferns covered the ground under our feet, with a lush greenery that felt comforting. Enormous tree trunks, mighty beyond our imagination, loomed around us. I have always loved to see magnificent trees *in situ*, and, here we were, among ancient conifers that somehow had escaped the blades of the early lumber industry that once operated here.



Western red-cedar at Cathedral Grove.

Straining my neck upward, my eyes followed the gnarly trunks to the sky. I could see that we were about to enter a very special place. We were under a towering canopy and were about to step back in time. As we walked farther, more signs informed us that some of these

trees were between 700 and 800 years old. Seldom do most people get a chance to see such timeless trees, clustered together like monuments. In among the older trees were new ones that would be the next generation of this grand forest.

We soon noticed that many of the older trees had fallen. They lay on the forest floor, adding to the effect the ferns provided. We figured that this may have been the reason why a warning sign about high winds was posted at the entrance to the trees. In 1997, Vancouver Island experienced extremely high winds that brought down hundreds of these giants. The pathways that we now walked had to be cleared and restored by cutting openings through the fallen trees. One would

think that this fallen clutter would detract from the appearance of the forest, but, instead, from these logs has come new life on the forest floor that supports its ecosystem.

The oldest trees in Cathedral Grove are the western red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*) of Vancouver Island. Very few of these stands were protected from logging in their early years. Trees first appeared here about 5,000 years ago, but a fire ravaged the Island in the 17th century,

destroying most of the existing trees and opening up areas for them to repopulate. The Island's earliest inhabitants found this rot-resistant tree suitable for many of their basic needs. Western red-cedar has been declared Vancouver Island's provincial tree.

Alongside the western red-cedar, stands their forest partner, western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). This is the primary young species in this old-growth forest. As the ancient giants die and fall, western hemlock replaces them as the new forest. Western hemlock likes to grow on old stumps and fallen logs. *Tsuga heterophylla* does not need intense, direct sunlight and can live under the canopy. The trees are easily identified by their reddish-brown bark and strongly grooved trunk.

Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) grow here too. This species is named after the noted botanist and plant collector David Douglas. Douglas made three expeditions to Canada in the early 19th century and identified over 200 plant



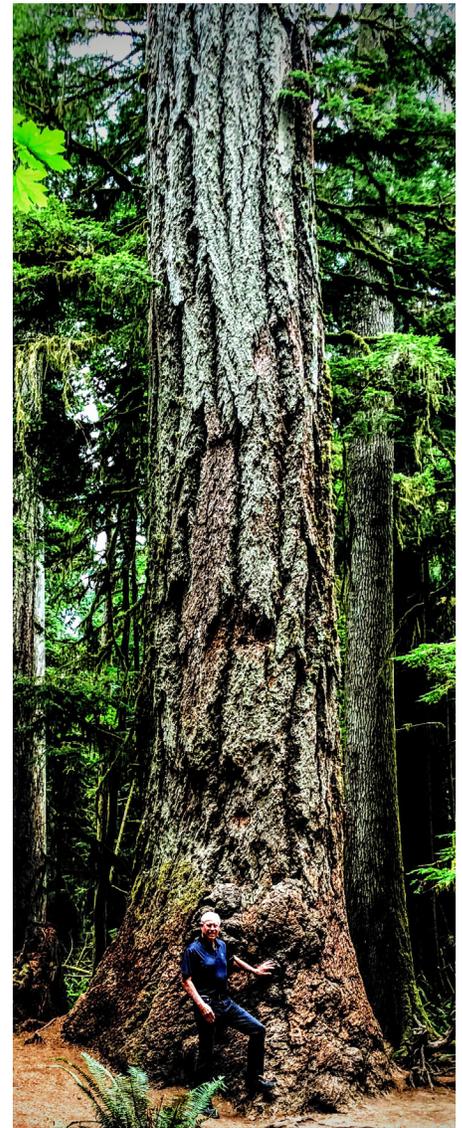
Western red-cedar (foreground) and Douglas-fir (background).



The red-cedar canopy towers above.



Hemlock seedlings grow at the base of western red-cedar.



Jack with a western red-cedar. Photo by Linda Christiansen, Jack's wife.

species in North America that had been unknown to Europeans. The common name Douglas-fir is misleading, since it is not a true fir (*Abies*), but is instead a *Pseudotsuga*, a false hemlock, another genus in the pine family (Pinaceae). H.R. MacMillan, a well-known British Columbia forester, donated much of the land for this park in 1944, in order to protect the Cathedral Grove.

The tallest western red-cedar that inhabited this park stood 233-feet tall and was 15 feet in

diameter. Unfortunately, in 1972, vandals set it on fire, and it had to be cut down.

Our time spent here that morning was truly a spiritual experience, as we wandered among these great giants of the mountains. We thought about the many generations of mankind that have walked these grounds and have felt the pure beauty and strength that these trees evoke.

Conifers are among the greatest trees on earth. Seeing them

protected in this wonderful park gladdened our hearts. These trees will be here for future generations to enjoy. If you get a chance to visit Vancouver Island, as we did, go see the trees in MacMillan Provincial Park and walk the pathways in and around the conifers. Your hearts will be gladdened, too.

Joe Stupka – Broom Hunter

Text Glenn Herold



Joe Stupka standing in front of 'Pine Glen', a witch's broom, within a specimen of *Picea abies* 'Nidiformis'. A fallen limb from a storm revealed the broom. Photo by David Horst.

Some nurserymen are born with sap in their blood. Prominent horticulturists such as Roy Klehm (Klehm Nursery, Barrington, IL), and Tom Pinney, Jr. (Evergreen Nursery, Sturgeon Bay, WI) have been in the business for several generations. Others rise to the top through perseverance and the love of plants. Joe Stupka was just such a person, considered one of the best grafters in the business and a renowned plantsman.

Born in 1926 in the small coal-mining town of Clarion, PA, where "a shot and a beer is considered a mixed drink," Joe took a while to find his niche. His father worked in the coal mines from 3am until 11am, and then worked in a blacksmith shop. Unlike his brothers, Joe

helped in the blacksmith shop rather than the mines. World War II came, and Joe felt the need to help his country. His attempts to enlist at the age of 16, however, were unsuccessful. Finally, with his parents' permission, he joined the Navy at age 17 and served for three and a half years.

Upon his return home, and with the help of the GI Bill, he finished high school. Following graduation, Joe went to Youngstown, OH, to work on the railroad, a career that lasted for 16 years. He was a fireman, a stoker, whose responsibility it was to keep the boiler going. Joe's dad used to say, "Always have two jobs: one with which to make a living and the other to use as a hobby. Learn as much as you can about it, though, because you never

know when you might need it." Joe turned to his hobby, plants.

While working for the railroad, Joe bought a little farm out in the country, near his parent's homestead in Pennsylvania. His idea was to use the land for growing Christmas trees. He cleared off the land in preparation for the first crop. His mother had an apartment to rent out, and it just so happened that one of the tenants was a forester for a nursery. "I'll fix you up with some trees when you're ready," he said. Joe ordered 1,000 trees, but when they arrived, it was not the large shipment that he was expecting. Instead, each tree looked like a toothpick. Not knowing any better, he lined them out. In that first year, all but 25 trees died. In his search for an explanation, he discovered that the trees had been rejected by another client of the forester. They were substandard trees.

Joe was disappointed in his first effort, but not discouraged. He decided to buy seed and raise seedlings himself. However, his attempts to purchase seed from other growers proved futile. No nurserymen would sell him seed because they viewed him as competition. Finally, he found a source for some *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine) and *Picea pungens* (Colorado spruce) seed from a man in Michigan. Again, he cleared the land, worked in some fresh manure, and sowed the seed. However, he sowed the seed at a much thicker rate than recommended. The

trees that emerged soon became diseased from the stand density and fresh manure. When he sought advice from other growers, he was turned away. His effort again turned out to be a failure.

Joe started reading books to find out how to do it right. He secured a reliable source for quality seed, and his third attempt produced a bumper crop. However, he was not the only one in the area producing Christmas trees. Competition was fierce. When it came time to sell his crop, he couldn't even get pennies per plant. Rather than give the trees away, he mowed them off. He went back to work for the railroad.

During layoffs from the railroad, Joe worked for Ralph Inglis, a nurseryman in Youngstown, OH.

Ralph asked him if he knew how to graft trees. Joe replied, "Sure," having dabbled in fruit tree grafting along with growing trees from seed. Joe said they did everything wrong in their early attempts, but he read up on the proper techniques and became quite successful at it.

After collaborating with Ralph for a while, Joe decided to go out on his own. He didn't have a greenhouse, so he attached some snow fence to elevated supports. He used manure as a source of heat. Each graft was covered in a plastic bag, placed on the manure, and heeled in with sawdust. The primitive system worked, and Joe was on his way to a lifetime of grafting success.

Joe sputtered along in the nursery

business. He got an old, used greenhouse, fixed it up, and used it until the end of his life. He produced a variety of plants at that time, but mainly for a single landscape architect. The architect would specify what he wanted, and Joe would supply the materials. Joe would grow the plants, and the architect's crews would dig them. One of the plants that the architect used often was a seedling of Bar Harbor juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* 'Bar Harbor') that had a much tighter form and slow growth rate. The architect liked it, and Joe propagated hundreds of cuttings from it. Feeling that it needed a name, the architect called it 'Little Joe'. It is the only one of Joe's introductions named for him.

Joe added landscape installation to diversify his business. In 1957, a convent in Villa Maria, PA, built a chapel and asked him to put in a bid for the landscaping. Joe replied, "I can't bid on the job. The plants cost the same, my truck costs the same, everything is the same; how can my bid be any different from the next guy's?" Joe never bid on the job, and the convent hired someone else.

Soon after the plants were installed at the convent, they showed signs of stress and died. The landscaper would not replace them. The convent then hired Joe to come and evaluate the situation. When he excavated a few of the dead trees, he discovered that they were all planted too deep, which caused them to suffocate. The convent hired Joe on the spot. He worked for the convent for 40 years, providing expertise and managing the workforce. Villa



One of the brooms Joe discovered is *Picea pungens* 'Millbrook', seen here growing in the garden of David Horst. Photo by David Horst.

Maria provided steady work, and Joe acknowledged that, "It was a good place to work."

Joe first got interested in witch's brooms when he met Chub Harper at an American Conifer Society convention in Philadelphia, PA, in 1974. They happened to sit next to each other on a tour bus and began to talk about what they were each doing. The tour took them to a nursery where they saw some *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine) witch's broom seedlings. Chub wanted to buy all of them! Joe told Chub about his nursery, which was just a short drive off his route back to Moline, IL. Chub stopped there after the meeting and went home with his truck filled to capacity. Most of these plants are in the Harper Collection of Dwarf and Rare Conifers at Hidden Lake Gardens in Tipton, MI, and in the Heartland Collection at the Bickelhaupt Arboretum in Clinton, IA.

Chub Harper cataloged over 100 witch's brooms and clones that Joe found and propagated over 25 years. All of them were named either after the place where they were found, or for the person from whom they were obtained. They are a virtual atlas of the states. A few have become successes and are now available nationally. Others were grown only by collectors or in arboreta.

Be it evergreen or deciduous, Joe could always recognize a unique plant. He once discovered a witch's broom on an *Acer palmatum* (Japanese maple) in Mercer, PA. The tree itself is unique, because it has survived several winters in



The broom of this tree was found by Joe. *Picea pungens* 'JB's Broom' has been growing in the Garden of David Horst. Photo by David Horst.

the -30°F range, extremely rare for a Japanese maple. On the tree was a broom with tiny leaves and a growth rate of less than one inch per year. Joe made many trips to the tree for grafting wood and to collect seed from the normal part of the tree, which he then used as understock. He called the witch's broom 'Kandy Kitchen' after the candy store where he found it. He got to know the owners well.

One winter day in 2000, the owners called Joe to report a problem with the broom. Under the weight of a heavy, wet snow, the broom twisted, and the main limb supporting the broom cracked. Joe determined that the best plan of attack would be to thin the broom through selective pruning and build a support for it. The technique proved successful, and the broom survives to this day. 'Kandy Kitchen' found its way into the nursery industry and is available

from several West Coast sources. Often a promising broom can result in disappointment. Growing along Route I-80 near Lehigh, PA, was a downy serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) containing a witch's broom, a rather rare occurrence. It looked nice, forming a tight ball low on the plant, so Joe dubbed it 'Sweet & Low'. However, the propagules would never result in a dwarf plant, indicating that a disease most likely caused the broom rather than a mutation.

A winner was a winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*) that Joe found on the grounds of Villa Maria. It was much slower growing than a typical winged euonymus, growing no more than two inches per year. The foliage stays green longer than the typical plant, but then turns a brilliant red, the plant's signature characteristic. For years Joe would take cuttings from it, grow them to landscape size, and use them

in his landscape jobs. He told Jim Zampini at Lake County Nursery in Ohio about it, and they were eager to buy the rights to the dwarf plant. The nursery introduced it by the name Pipsqueak™ (*Euonymus alatus* 'Pipzam').

Lake County Nursery also bought the rights to a *Thuja occidentalis* (eastern arborvitae) witch's broom dubbed 'Linesville' by Joe. He found the broom in a cemetery in Linesville, PA. Joe almost missed the tiny mutation, but the juvenile foliage was distinctive. Not having much rootstock to use, he grafted four scions onto just one rootstock. The bottom cutting began to form its own roots, indicating that the plant would be easy to propagate from cuttings. The son of Lake County's owner wanted to call it 'Bowling Ball', alluding to its rounded growth habit, but the owner said that Joe deserved more respect. Thus, the name Mr. Bowling Ball™ (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Bobazam') came to be. However, it is important to note that 'Bobazam' is not the correct cultivar name. The ACS recognizes Joe's wishes and, therefore, only recognizes the name 'Linesville'.

One of Joe's best introductions was *Picea glauca* 'Mac Gold', a white spruce. Dick McConnell, a Christmas tree grower, discovered it in his fields. No one wanted to buy the odd plant. It had foliage that changed from gold in the spring to a lime-green hue in the summer. Joe asked if he could buy it, and Mac was happy to get rid of it. Joe dug it as a six-foot tree, planted it in his yard, and began successfully to propagate it. A couple of years later, Joe had

a pole barn constructed not too far from the tree. Shortly after the construction was completed, the tree rapidly deteriorated and died. Upon examination of the site, Joe discovered that the contractors had apparently cleaned their brushes near the tree and disposed of the brush cleaners by dumping them over the root zone of the tree. Fortunately, Joe still had small plants in the nursery. He kept one and gave the others away. When asked about what his favorite introductions were, Joe was always quick to mention 'Mac Gold' as being near the top of the list.

Patience is a virtue for anyone, but especially in the nursery industry where you must wait for a plant to grow and develop to see its potential. This became very apparent to Joe in his experience with a weeping Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Glauca Pendula') named 'Candlestick'. Joe originally saw this plant when he was working for another nursery. All of the limbs swept down close to the trunk, forming an apron. He grafted the plant, but all of the grafts seemed to develop into normal trees. So he sold them as such, not keeping any for himself. About 25 years later, he saw a unique Colorado spruce in the front yard of a residence. It looked exactly like the plant he had grafted a generation earlier. His curiosity piqued and he inquired about the unusual plant. Apparently, the owner had purchased the plant from Joe, who had sold it not realizing that it took on its distinctive form later. The top retains an upright growth habit; only the lower branches weep. Joe

propagated the plant again and had one in his own nursery.

The term "friendship plant" usually refers to hostas, but any plant can serve as a way for people to meet. Once while hunting a strip mine in Callemburg, PA, Joe found an unusual plant among thousands of *Pinus nigra* (Austrian pine). This one had soft needles and a narrow, upright form, quite different from the normally stiff needles and spreading form of the species. He knocked on the garden owner's door, and a woman about his age answered and asked him to come in. At first, Joe declined, citing his soiled boots, but she insisted. The woman asked, "Do you remember me?" Joe stated that he had never met her. She replied, "My name is Betty Hoover; we went to first grade together!" Joe was amazed that she would remember him after 50 years!

Joe had his share of encounters with eccentric individuals, though. Topping the list was his relationship with the Swanson brothers from Polk, PA. They had numerous unusual plants in their yard, collected over many generations. One was a shrubby Canadian hemlock that Joe wanted. He asked if he could take some cuttings. They said that he could, but only four, and they wanted two back. Therefore, if only two grafts were successful, none would be left for Joe to keep. Fortunately, they all took, and Joe named it 'Swanson'. Joe traded for the broom cuttings with identical *Malus sylvestris* (European crabapple).

Broom hunting can be rewarding, but it can also be hazardous.

Standard gear for broom hunting expeditions includes: a ladder or climbing spurs, a long rope, a snakebite kit, and a rifle. Joe's favorite is a 30/40 Craig. Many brooms are found high in tall trees, hence the spurs and rope. Forests where Joe found many brooms are home to rattlesnakes, so he took the snakebite kit along as a precaution. The rifle was more for broom retrieval than for protection.

Joe discovered a broom in a white pine along the highway right-of-way near Strattanville, PA. It was about 20 to 30 feet above the ground, and there was a repair garage about 200 feet away. Climbing this tree would be difficult, so Joe took out his rifle, and fired into the broom. Several cuttings drifted

to the ground. Hearing the shots, some men came running out of the garage to see what was going on. "Just missed a rabbit!" said Joe. When a rifle won't do the job, sometimes you have to go to the next step. Joe found a broom growing along the side of a big cliff near where he hunted. He tried shooting down some cuttings, but they always got hung up in the tree. Not to be deterred, Joe took three sticks of dynamite and blew the entire broom out of the tree. It was full of cones and one of the resultant seedlings turned into a tight, slow-growing upright plant, worthy of introduction. Thus, *Tsuga canadensis* 'Canoe' (Canoe Canadian hemlock) was born. This was another of Joe's favorite discoveries.

Joe collected cuttings from over 100 brooms in his lifetime, and probably saw 10 times that many. Yet there was always a thrill when he discovered a new one, and he couldn't help speculating on what kind of plant it would make. He had several favorite conifers, but his all-time favorite one grew far to the west of his home - the ancient Rocky Mountain bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*) found in Colorado. Like Joe, they are relics from the past, but capable of surviving in a tough environment. The plant world needs more men like Joe Stupka. He was tough and resilient. He is missed.

Left to right: Joe Stupka, Paul Faedo, Chub Harper, and Glenn Herold (seated). Photo by Terry Herold.



Cryptomeria japonica

A Wonderfully Varied Species

Text and Photography Jack Ayers

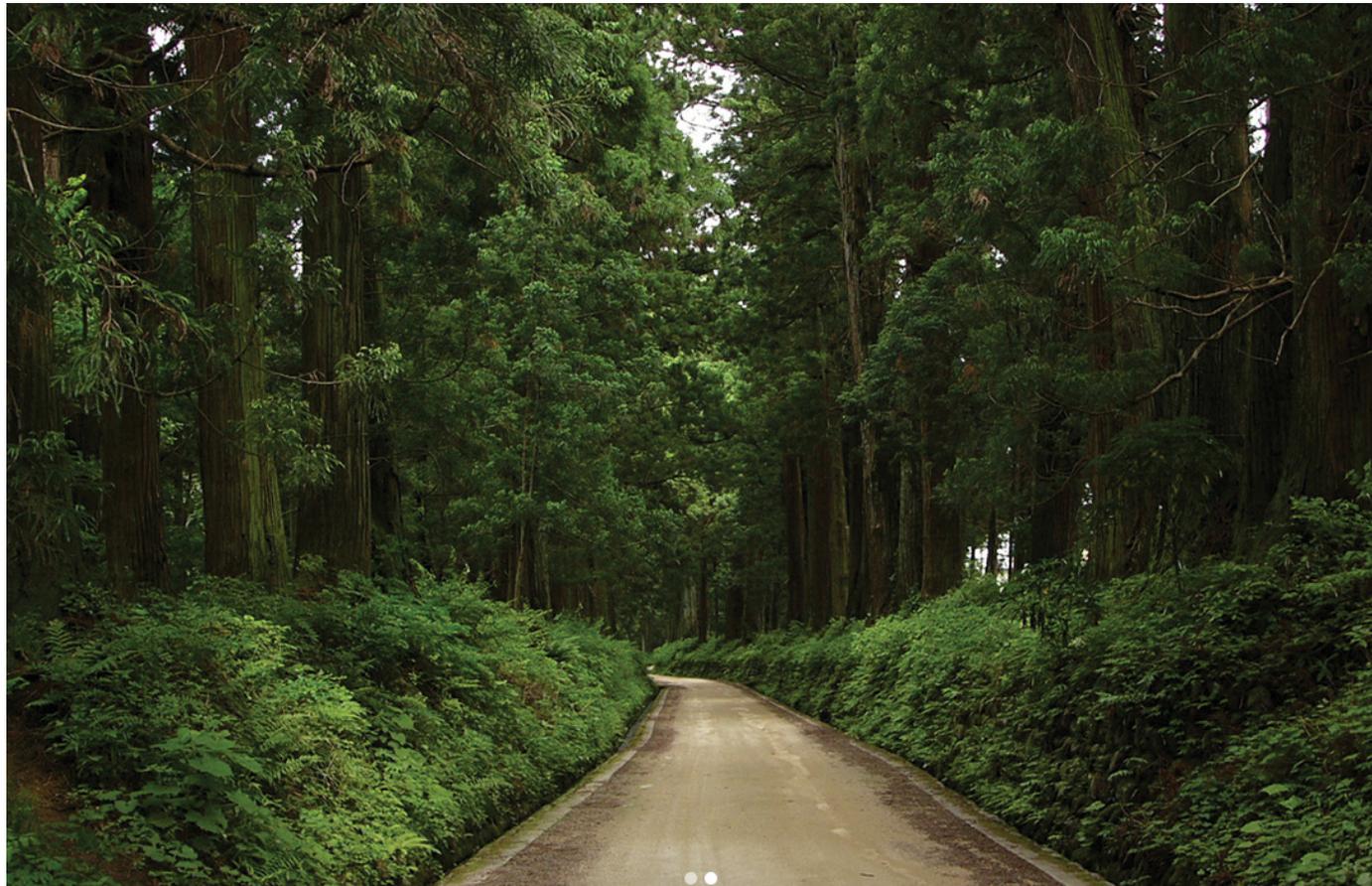


Figure 1: View along the Nikko Kaido, a 400-year old avenue in Japan.

Some of the first plants I grew when I became seriously interested in conifers, around 1990, were selected cultivars of *Cryptomeria japonica* (Japanese cedar). I continue to think that the varied forms of Japanese cedar are some of the most interesting conifers we can grow. The beautiful picture of a branch of *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Cristata' (cristate Japanese cedar) in the 2019 Spring CQ inspired me to write about the species and some of its cultivars. *Cryptomeria* is a monotypic genus, which means that there is only one species, *japonica*, but there are many, many cultivars.

Cryptomeria japonica, a large tree in its native Japan, has long been much loved there, where it is known by the common name, *sugi*, 杉. Perhaps the best evidence of the high regard the Japanese hold for this species is the Nikko Kaido, an avenue consisting originally of 200,000 trees planted by Shōgun Takugawa Ieyasu in 1617 CE. He was the founder of the first shōgun of the Tokugawa shogunate of Japan, which ruled the country from the Battle of Sekigahara, in 1600 CE, until the Meiji Restoration 268 years later, in 1868, which restored imperial rule. The original trees lined the approximately 80-mile

route from Edo (modern Tokyo) to Nikko, an important Shinto shrine, in the Tochigi Prefecture in the mountains north of Tokyo. Many of those trees have not survived, but some stretches of the route are still very impressive, as Figure 1 illustrates. My wife, Sharon, and I were most fortunate to experience a portion of the route in 2004 when we visited Nikko.

Impressive as the 400-year old trees of the Nikko Kaido are, they are far from the oldest specimens of the species in Japan. This honor belongs to the Jōmon Sugi tree (*yakusugi*), located on Yakushima



Figure 2: Jōmon Sugi (*jakusugi*), the oldest *Cryptomeria japonica*. Photo found online.

Island, Kagoshima Prefecture, on the southern tip of the Japanese archipelago. We have not seen this tree, which stands in a site that is difficult to access, but I plan to visit it. The tree is not only the oldest of the species, but also the largest conifer in Japan, with a height of 83 feet and a circumference of 54 feet. Tree ring dating of its branches estimates it to be about 2,000-years old. (Figure 2)

As an Oregonian, I was amused to learn that when restoration work on the aforementioned Shinto temple began, the large, missing *sugi* columns could not be duplicated. The decision was then made to substitute the columns

with Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), which were shipped in from Oregon.

Over the years, I have planted a few *Cryptomeria japonica* cultivars in my garden. 'Elegans' is a moderate grower with soft, long, juvenile foliage that is green in summer and turns plum-colored in winter. This plant was selected in Japan around 1850 and introduced into the West before the end of the 19th century. Although there are several variants, the one I grow is 'Elegans Aurea' (Figure 3). In my garden, this plant tends to have its lower branches die. Perhaps it needs more sun, so that it can be as attractive as it might be. This plant is said to become more golden in winter, an effect that I have not noticed.

Another cultivar with interesting foliage is 'Spiralis', also known by its nickname, granny's ringlets. Both cultivar and common names derive from the curved needles evident



Figure 3: Foliar detail of 'Elegans Aurea', one of several selected sports of 'Elegans'.



Figure 4: Foliar detail of 'Spiralis', popular because of its curly needles.

in the closeup shown in Figure 4. This plant initially grows at a modest rate, but, as it matures, it can grow 12 inches or more per year. It does not mind heavy pruning, but the new branches show few of the spiral-formed needles. My 20-year old plant has grown to such an extent that it will have to be removed.

A good plant with a somewhat slower growth rate is 'Black Dragon', so named because of its very dark-green, prickly needles. My plant, shown in Figure 5, gets less sun than it would like. It grows under an oak tree. As a consequence, it is somewhat open and has a



Figure 5: 'Black Dragon', a dark-needled selection with a narrow, pyramidal form.

less pyramidal form than it might otherwise have.

An even slower grower is 'Little Diamond', one of my favorites, shown in Figure 6. It grows in a compact form to about three-feet tall in 10 years and has small needles, beautifully proportioned to the size of the plant.

Plants with yellow or white banding, or variegation on the needles, are always popular in the garden, and perhaps the most popular of the many selections of *sugi* with gold to white colored needles is 'Sekkan' (Figure 7). Introduced to America from Japan



Figure 6:
'Little Diamond',
a dense, slow
grower with
short needles.



Figure 7: 'Sekkan', a magnificent mound with fine needles.

in about 1970, the new growth on this plant has soft yellow to white needles and is fast-growing. It can reach 20-feet tall in 10 years. One of the much slower-growing, yellow-toned forms is 'Vilmorin Gold', a sport of 'Vilmoriniana', which, in my garden, looks more chartreuse than gold. It grows as a very compact bun at one to two inches per year, a little more than 'Vilmoriniana' (Figure 8). I have particularly enjoyed this plant for the last three years as I have watched the development of a bright yellow sport on its back side (Figure 9). Plans are underway to propagate this sport this winter, and I am most anxious to see how it does on its own roots. The challenge is that plants this yellow generate little chlorophyll. They often do not survive on their own.



Figure 8: 'Vilmoriniana', a popular, compact miniature.



Figure 9: Yellow spout on the back of the 'Vilmoriniana' in Figure 8.

Lastly, I mention my absolute favorite *sugi*, 'Tenzan'. My plant, shown in Figure 10, is about 20 years old and is 30 inches wide and 15 inches high. It was selected in the 1970's from a

sport at the 'T Boeketje J. Kools Nurseries & Gardening in Tilburg, The Netherlands. It is the most compact conifer I have ever seen, so dense that one cannot insert a pencil anywhere through the

surface without displacing a twig. If you place the palm of your hand on its surface, you will get an absolutely unique sensation. Would there were more plants with such individual character!



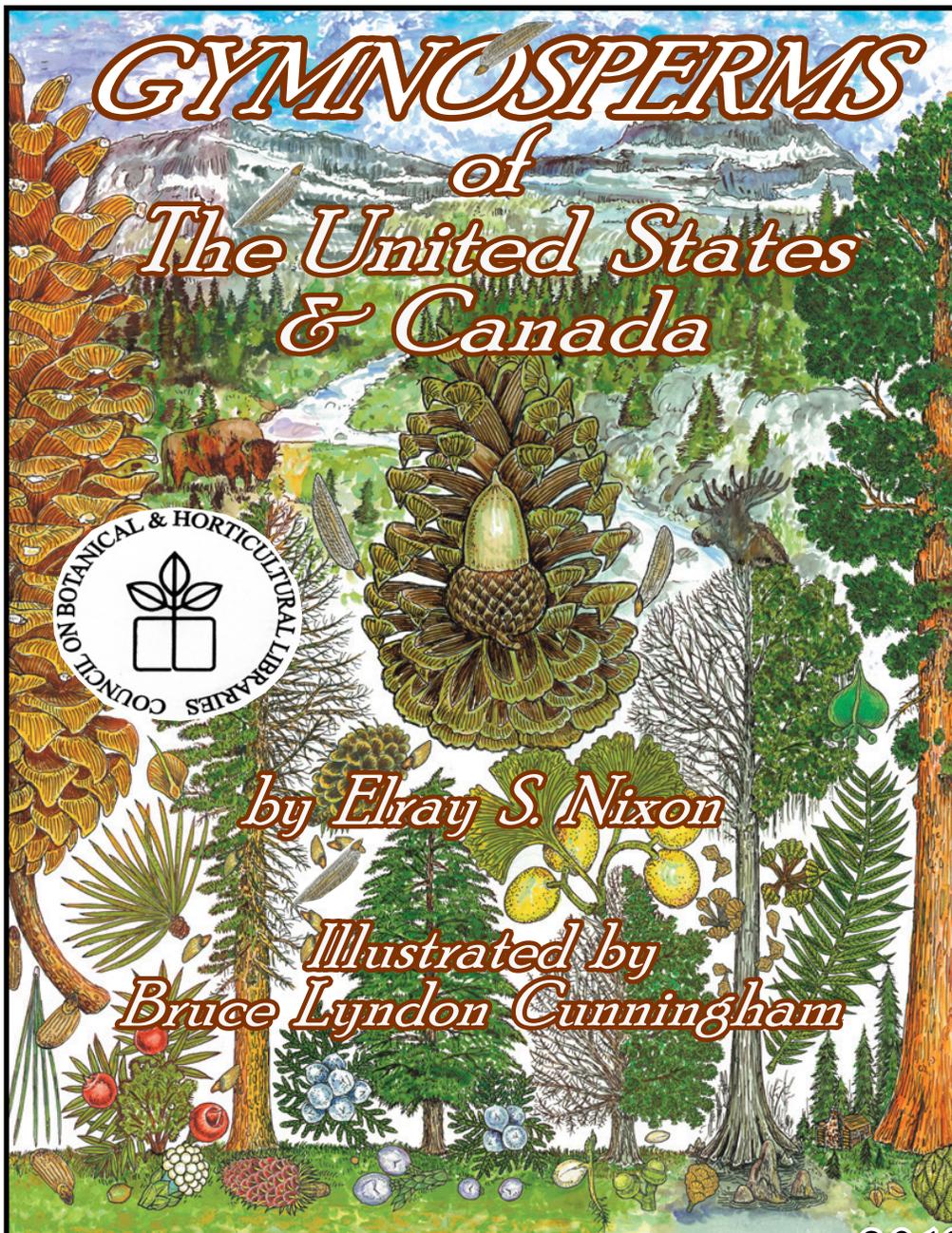
Figure 10: 'Tenzan', the smallest and most dense form of any *Cryptomeria*.

BOOK SALE

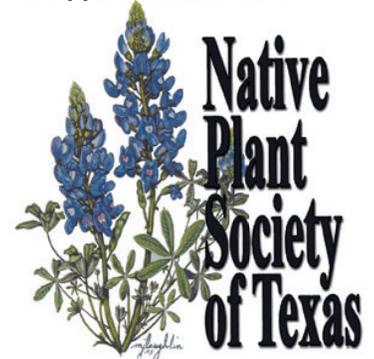
HARDCOVER Reg. \$75... Sale Price \$49.95

SOFTCOVER Reg. \$60... Sale Price \$39.95

PURCHASE at www.forester-artist.com
or 180 CR 8201 + Nacogdoches, TX 75964



AWARDED BY



FULL COLOR
SIZE: 8.5" x 11"
208 PAGES
ADD 10% POSTAGE

NOMINATED FOR CBHL INTERNATIONAL AWARD 2012

ACS NORTHEAST REGIONAL 2020 CONFERENCE

Collections and Collectors: Boston's Semi-Urban Oases

September 25 - 27, 2020

Boston Metro Area

HOTEL: Boston/Dedham Hilton, Dedham, MA

Text Christie Dustman

You may have been to Boston and gotten lost in the Arnold Arboretum. Maybe you've walked the Freedom Trail in the city with the multitudes, but have you experienced **semi-urban Boston**? Not downtown Boston, with its tiny, pocket-gardens behind brownstones or skyline roof decks, but rather properties as small as 5,000 square feet that fan out from downtown Boston into semi-urban communities. These properties sport small but mighty lots with interesting houses and carefully considered outdoor spaces.

In a rare combination of proximity and serendipity, the Northeast Region is able to showcase *five* urban

treasures in Roslindale and West Roxbury, MA. These two semi-urban Boston municipalities are a stone's throw from the Arnold Arboretum, and their nearness affords a wonderful opportunity for our conference-goers. All these gardens are within two miles of each other and that means boarding the bus will take more time than the trip between gardens!

You might wonder how much time it takes to walk through and see a garden of a few thousand square feet. Imagine taking a large rolling spread of a traditional garden and condense it into one tenth of an acre. Rather than there being less to see, these gardens are so compressed and layered, that there is



A scene from the ACS Reference Garden at the Wakefield Estate Arboretum. Photo by Deborah Merriam.

more to meet the eye. The concentration requires that each plant be intentionally curated and maintained, and the entire property is the “garden”- not just a front foundation planting or back island bed. Here even the driveways are part of the visual feast. Strip away blankets of grass, long driveways, and swaths of mass plantings, and you get semi-urban gardens.

There is also the need for multilayered function and practicality in the layout of such a small piece of property. These homeowners need to accommodate family, kids, pets, two cars, snow, an outdoor gathering space, access for the postal carrier, and privacy. They also need to look fantastic. When every inch counts, and you don't have a parking garage or back forty to turn to, both form and function need to be paramount. The plants and functional elements need to come together effortlessly. In some cases, the plants are part of the function, often acting as natural privacy fences.

Conifers, when well-selected for their growth rate, habit, and shape, are primary building blocks of these semi-urban gardens because they cope with heat, drought, and urban conditions, all while providing year-round interest. A large suburban garden may have a single conifer as a focal point in the middle of a planting bed. In semi-urban gardens, the garden beds are compressed, and the focal points are not only closer, but more layered and complex. Dwarf and intermediate conifer selections dominate these gardens, and careful, regular pruning is required to keep them in scale with their surroundings. As we all know, there is a conifer for every spot.

Because the theme of the conference revolves around the idea of collections, you will see conifer collections at each of the gardens used as building blocks of sophisticated plant vignettes. There isn't room for the luxury of showcasing conifers in a sea of mulch. So, with limited space and big conifer appetites, how do semi-urban gardeners integrate dozens of conifers into their gardens without creating chaos, or limiting the functionality of the full property? Each featured garden nimbly climbs these hurdles.

Our lunch venue at the Wakefield Estate offers yet a different take on the idea of collections and collecting. Currently a private not-for-profit foundation, the

estate is a Level II accredited arboretum and houses our newest ACS reference garden. The last private owner, plant collector and trained landscape architect, Polly Wakefield, collaborated with the Arnold Arboretum to pursue her obsession with propagating *Cornus kousa* (Korean dogwood) and many other species. We will step into this botanical wonderland for lunch and then back to the private gardens.

Sean Halloran, plant propagator for the Arnold Arboretum, will be the keynote speaker Friday night and will delve into the topic of wild collecting and the Arboretum's 10-year initiative to expand the Living Collections as a valuable resource for scientific research and conservation. He will discuss some of his adventures in collecting and the trials and tribulations of propagating these plants from seed. The lecture tees up our Saturday afternoon event, a rare behind-the-scenes tour led by Sean and some research fellows of the Arnold's greenhouses and nurseries. We will also take a look at a handful of conifer specimens recently propagated and planted on the grounds and hear about their unique stories. Don't miss this action-packed examination of collecting and collections in semi-urban Boston.

Saturday Tour:

[Here are tidbits about four of the seven garden stops](#)

Wakefield Estate Arboretum (Lunch and Tours)

Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, and a Level II accredited arboretum, the Wakefield Estate Arboretum in Milton, MA, is a new ACS Reference Garden. The property has been in the same family for 300 years and is an excellent example of a cultural landscape, ultimately transformed by Polly Wakefield from a family estate, surrounded by farmland, into a fascinating garden. Polly Wakefield worked for more than 50 years propagating and collecting to create a spectacular landscape that includes more than 100 conifer cultivars, 300 Korean dogwoods, a 70-year-old, four-square planting of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (dawn redwood), and a myriad of designed spaces with rare species. There are also chickens and a llama. The Wakefield Estate features a large tent, has public restrooms, and bus parking. We will have a special catered lunch.



Front garden vignette at the home of Christie Dustman and Patti Ryan. Photo by Damianos Photography.

Garden of Christie Dustman and Patti Ryan

This garden reflects the creative efforts of a mighty team, long time ACS members Christie Dustman, a professional garden designer, and Patti Ryan, a professional furniture maker. In their own personal garden, these two artists have let nothing hinder their zeal for plants, stone, metal, and whimsy. Starting in 2006, they have transformed every inch of their semi-urban, 8,500 square feet property into a collector's garden using plants and objects as sculptures and layering material upon material for complex vignettes. Among the 60+ conifer cultivars, you may find a basket hoop screening panel of *Taxus × media* 'Beanpole' (Beanpole hybrid yew) or a 25-foot tall *Cupressus nootkatensis* 'Van den Akker' (Van den Akker Nootka cypress) next to a sculpture of double handled cross-cut saws. Reclaimed and cast-off items are used as art and decoration.

Garden of Stephen Smith and Richard Allsbrook

Stephen is a former tailor and has artistically assembled a seamless tapestry of conifers, unique perennials, paths, and a water feature around a fabulous event space inside a converted 100-year-old garage. Stephen is a collector of all things, but especially objects, ornaments, bird houses, and house plants. He has a magnificent eye for drama, and you will see a 15-foot tall weeping *Picea abies* 'Pendula' (weeping Norway spruce) with bamboo supports, a 20-foot tall, well-manicured *Ilex x aquipernyi* 'Meschick' (dragon lady holly), and enter the backyard through a curtain formed by a *Larix decidua* 'Pendula' (weeping European larch). This is a well-appointed and delightful garden in a dense neighborhood.



A hidden vignette at the Garden of Stephen Smith and Richard Allsbrook. Photo by Damianos Photography.

Garden of Annette Jacobs

A longtime client of Christie Dustman, Annette Jacobs is a plant lover and appreciator. Over the last 13 years, Annette and Christie have teamed to build a verdant garden around the existing Japanese maple and magnolia trees in the front yard and a spectacular eight-foot tall *Ilex pedunculosa* (longstalk holly) hedge in the backyard. Annette has begged Christy each year to add more and more conifers into her garden, including *Picea omorika* 'Pendula' (weeping Serbian spruce), various *Pinus parviflora* (Japanese white pine), and four different *Picea abies* 'Pendula' (weeping Norway spruce). The blending of colors and form provides a quiet and artistic home setting.

The Boston/Dedham Hilton: To receive the ACS reserved room price, reservations must be booked by Monday, August 24, 2020.



Lush oasis of the Annette Jacobs Garden. Photo by DamianosPhotography.

The Jean Iseli Memorial Award

**Applications Now Being Accepted and Must Be Received By
May 1, 2020**

The American Conifer Society, which supports the development, conservation, and propagation of conifers with an emphasis on dwarf or unusual varieties, awards a \$4,000 grant to a public garden, arboretum, or horticultural institution.

Iseli Nursery has generously pledged to grant the winner a 50% discount on any plants purchased from them in conjunction with the award, up to \$8000

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

Proposals must contain the following:

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

Send Applications to:
Ethan Johnson
ethjohnson42@gmail.com

39005 Arcadia Circle
Willoughby, OH 44094

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

**Announcements of the award recipient will be made by
July 1, 2020**

Amending the ACS Bylaws

A Message to the Membership



The American Conifer Society is governed by a set of bylaws that direct how we must carry out the business of the Society on both the national and regional levels. Bylaws are not meant to be easily changed, but the Society does provide for changes by amendment, which then must be approved by the membership. Our current bylaws were created at the time of the founding of the ACS in 1983.

It is advisable to update bylaws to keep up with the times. The ACS Bylaws Committee, led by Central Region President Byron Baxter, undertook a long-needed review of the Society's bylaws and made recommendations for changes to the Board of Directors, which approved the following amendments. A brief explanation of the reason for the changes accompanies each proposal.

The Society's existing bylaws require that the membership be notified of the proposed changes well in advance of the vote, which must take place at a national convention.

This message serves as the required notice to the membership, and the vote will take place at the ACS National Convention in Clinton, IA, in June of 2020. You may view the current bylaws on the Society's website. Go to www.conifersociety.org, and hold your cursor over "About Us". Roll over "Background and Information" in the drop-down menu that appears, then "Business Office", then click on "ACS Records and Documents". You can access the ACS Bylaws from this page. You may compare the current bylaws with the changes that will be voted upon in June.

Bylaw Amendment Recommendations

Amendment 1. Strike Article VII Sections 7.12, 7.12.1, 7.12.2, 7.12.3, 7.12.4. and substitute:

7.12 Election of Regional Officers. Election of regional officers and regional directors will be by majority vote and must be completed before the annual national meeting. Each region will adopt its own method for conducting elections, supported by special rules of order for the chosen method. Regional election procedures must be approved by the board of directors prior to implementation.

This change is needed because, under the current bylaws:

- *The only way to hold elections of regional officers is via mailed ballots. This is expensive and burdensome for the regions. The revision to section 7.12 enables regions to decide whether they want to continue to use mailed ballots or incorporate other means based on current and future technology. Each region will be required to submit its own special rules for conducting elections to the ACS Board of Directors for approval.*
- *All of the subsections of the current section 7.12 detail how these paper ballots are to be handled in order for the election to be validated. These sections will no longer be needed if the proposed change is approved by the membership.*

Amendment 2. Amend by addition. That wherever notice is required, the words "**electronic notification or mail**" be inserted to define the action.

This amendment would allow the use of electronic notification wherever the bylaws currently specify that notification will be made via "mail", allowing for greater efficiency and cost savings.

Amendment 3. Amend by addition.

4.1.1 The Board may adopt Standing Rules and Special Rules to help manage the Society. Standing Rules will be published as a conforming document to the Policies of the Board. Special Rules will be published as an independent document. No Standing Rule or Special Rule conflicting with the ACS Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or Bylaws will be adopted.

Standing Rules are of an administrative nature and conform to the Policies of the Board. Special Rules modify the rules of order and are an independent governing document. Adoption of this amendment provides the Board of Directors the authority to improve the management of the Society while requiring documented transparency of the process, available to the membership at all times.

Amendment 4. Strike Article IV Sections 4.14 (1) and (1)(a) and substitute:

4.14 Special Meetings. Special Meetings may be called by the President or three voting Board members and require four days' notice by electronic notification or mail. The Board is authorized to conduct electronic meetings to facilitate the management of Society business. Electronic meetings must be supported by adopted special rules of order.

This amendment addresses how the ACS Board of Directors can conduct Special Meetings, and, basically, it catches us up to the digital age, enabling notification by electronic means and for these Special Meetings to be held via online conferences, etc. This amendment will result in increased efficiency and cost savings to the Society.

Amendment 5. Amend Article IV, Section 4.5 as follows:

4.5 Officers. The officers of the Society are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The officers will be elected by the Board of Directors at an organizational meeting in conjunction with the annual membership meeting. All members of the Society in good standing are eligible for nomination.

A member of the Board elected as an officer relinquishes his/her responsibilities as a regional representative.

This amendment is put forward to address a number of problems:

- *The bylaws currently state that the ACS Vice President will also be the Treasurer. While a member may hold two offices, this amendment enables the Board to elect a Treasurer with accounting and financial expertise, as well as a Vice President with different skills.*
- *This amendment also addresses conflicts within the existing bylaws regarding who may be nominated to seek office.*

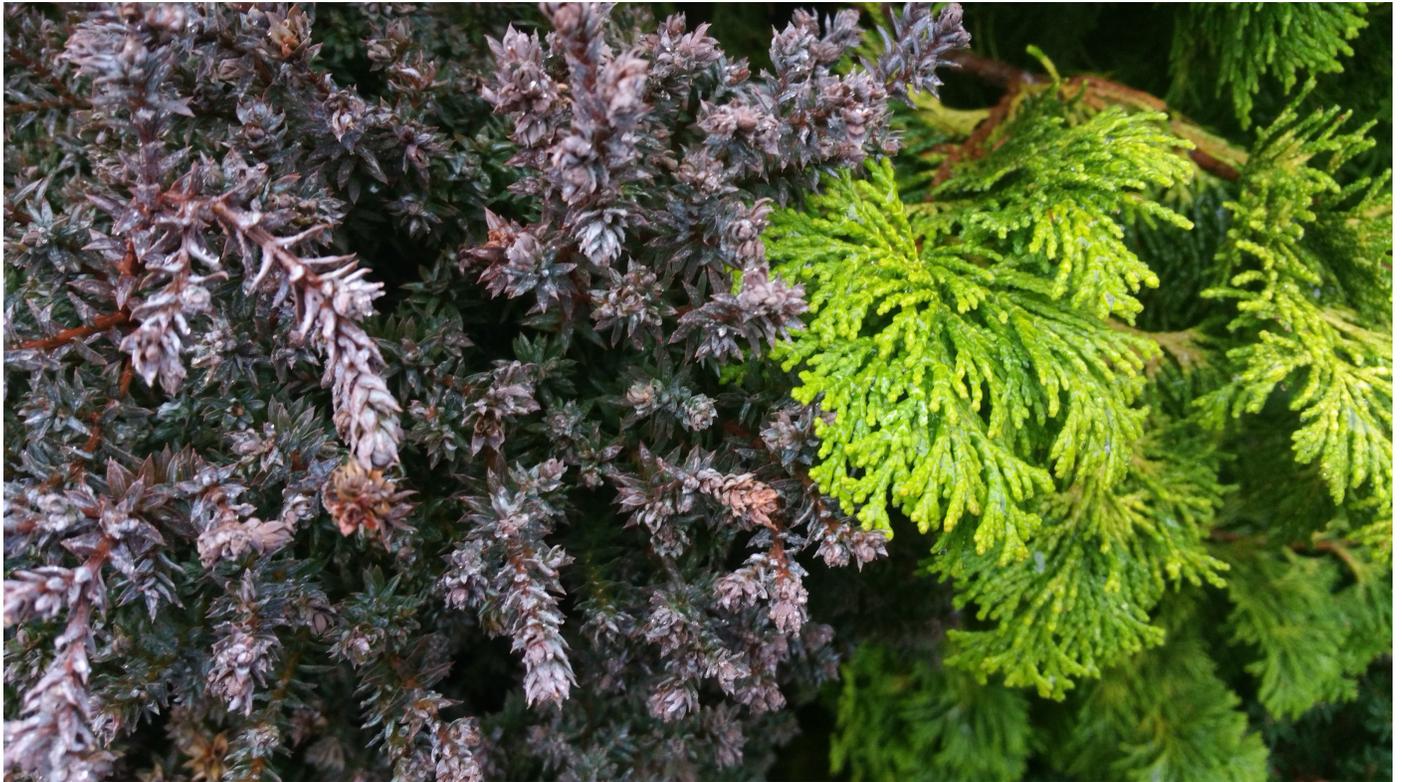
It is important that people acting on behalf of the Society act in accordance with our bylaws and, also, that those bylaws are consistent throughout, are not needlessly complicated or restrictive, and allow for changes for the better, such as allowing use of technological innovations that didn't even exist when the ACS was founded.

Your consideration of these proposed amendments is important to the Society, as is your vote, this June in Clinton. If you would like more information or would like to discuss any of these proposals, please call or email your regional president or director or:

Byron Baxter, Bylaws Committee Chair
Dave Olszyk, ACS President

How Do I Begin?

Text and Photography Mary Warren, Gardening Artists



Chamaecyparis thyoides 'Rubicon' (Red Star™ Atlantic white cypress) (l)
Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Confucius' (Confucius Hinoki cypress) (r)

“How do I begin?” In my garden designing career, I have often heard this question from new gardeners who want to start a conifer garden with a few tiny conifers. “What could you do with these tiny conifers, plant them into a balcony container or right into the ground?” Well, I have some ideas to assist you in creating a personal conifer garden.

As a designer with artistic training, I’m going to suggest that you view each specimen, asking these plant-relationship questions: Are all the conifers dark green? Are they the same genus (cedar, spruce, or pine)? What’s their needle shape or texture? Answering these questions will enable you to create your own unique, personal garden.

First of all, read about your trees prior to planting. Consult the ACS’ Conifer Database on the website (conifersociety.org). When you do, you will ensure that you site your conifers knowing their soil, water, 10-year size, and sun requirements. Your specimens will reward you for your research.

Then, arrange and rearrange your conifers. Experiment with blue next to chartreuse, dark-green next to apple-green, white-tipped next to solid-colored. Mix up the needle sizes: pine next to *Cryptomeria*, *Chamaecyparis* next to yew, *Taxus baccata* (English yew) next to *Sciadopitys verticillata* (Japanese umbrella pine), large needles next to small, wide fan sprays next to spiraled, rope-like needles.

Keep shifting the plants into a variety of combinations. You will begin to notice how each plant’s individual characteristics of color and texture play off the others. Chartreuse *Taxodium distichum* (bald cypress) next to blue *Picea pungens* (Colorado spruce); rough-textured *Juniperus scopulorum* (Rocky Mountain juniper) next to soft-textured *Abies amabilis* (Pacific silver fir); short *Pinus mugo* (mugo pine) next to tall *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* ‘Wissel’s Saguaro’ (Wissel’s Saguaro Lawson cypress).

Your conifers are the “bones” of your garden. Place each one as if it were the sole plant within your line of sight. When you place larger

conifers, situate them in primary positions: on top of a mound, off-center within a large, flat area, or near a substantial rock formation. These then become your focal points. The second tier of planting will be mid-sized conifers, offset from one another to enhance the taller focal points. Think of the soft undulations of branch structure, needle texture, and transitioning heights to connect the two levels.

When I design, I often work with tracing paper over an outlined garden sketch, drawn roughly to scale. Doing so allows one to play with a variety of options on paper first, before committing to planting. You can place potential

designs over your scale model until you achieve a pleasing visual arrangement. Continue trying new ideas until you find just the right combination and design for you. Lay out your plants in a swirl or in concentric circles or in contiguous circles, keeping a focal-point conifer at the center of each formation.

As the conifers fill your garden space, a structural framework will emerge. For example, you may want to grow only conifers, or you may wish to add herbaceous perennials such as *Echinacea*, *Lithodora*, or hellebores to provide extra color. The silhouette of evergreens will remain your visual focus in winter when seasonal color

has died down, and the perennials have gone dormant.

Consider Hakone grass, a mix of ferns, or species tulips that flourish in drier environments to compliment your conifers. Some combinations that I like include coral *Agastache* next to blue *Pinus taeda* 'Montgomery' (Montgomery loblolly pine); red *Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower) paired with *Pinus mugo* 'Cranberry Candle'; *Pinus thunbergii* (Japanese black pine) underplanted with *Tulipa saxatilis* (candia tulip).

Consider foliage thickness or opaqueness as well as height in your arrangement. These elements add "weight" to your configuration of



Cryptomeria japonica 'Dinger' (Dinger Japanese cedar) (l)
Abies concolor 'Wintergold' (Wintergold white fir) (r)



Picea omorika 'Pendula Brunns' (Brunns weeping Serbian spruce) (top), *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Gold Strike' (Gold Strike creeping juniper) (bottom)



Pinus mugo 'Mops' (Mops mugo pine) (bottom)
Picea omorika 'Pendula Bruns' (Bruns weeping Serbian spruce) (top)

plants. Dark colors and foliage-dense plants “weigh” more. *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Filiformis' (threadleaf Lawson cypress) may be tall, but its airy structure is lighter than the solid *Picea abies* 'Nidiformis' (bird's nest spruce) of the same height that might be situated nearby. A planting of *Abies nordmanniana* 'Golden Spreader' (Golden Spreader Nordmann fir), with its yellow highlights and lateral habit, will provide more contrast to a setting than a grouping of blue-green *Podocarpus lawrencei* 'Blue Gem' (Blue Gem mountain plum-pine).

The island planting bed is an ideal place for your most significant conifers. You can view it “in the round” and from multiple angles. Dividing available space exactly in half results in a contrived arrangement. Remember, your foundation conifer is the reference point, from which you place the remaining plants. Walk around your planting area as one does as the first step in a pruning job. Your goal is to work the entire composition.

Refrain from beginning your garden scene in one corner; rather, sketch and work the entire space. Direct your focus to the bigger picture, growing your specimen collection organically, so that it looks as it would in nature without human intervention. If you have multiple mugo pines, consider their structural characteristics and create a windswept arrangement, or place a taller weeping tree to cascade downward toward a spreading dwarf groundcover.

Use groupings for volume. In this way, your eye will travel naturally



Picea orientalis 'Tom Thumb Gold' (Tom Thumb Gold Caucasian spruce) (l)
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Columnaris Glauca' (blue columnar Lawson cypress) (r)

from one plant to another: *Picea omorika* 'Pendula Bruns' (Bruns weeping Serbian spruce) underplanted with *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Golden Carpet' (Golden Carpet creeping juniper); weeping *Pinus strobus* 'Angel Falls' (Angel Falls eastern white pine) flowing downward onto a spreading *Juniperus horizontalis* 'Pancake' (pancake creeping juniper); a cushion-type *Tsuga canadensis* 'Gentsch White' (Gentsch White Canadian hemlock) sprouting from under an open-formed, vase-

shaped shrub. Including a variety of color, texture, and form will enhance viewer interest. Finishing your work involves planting smaller species or flat specimens at the front edges or along pathways, or as connections between diverse plantings. You needn't place every tall plant to the rear, or place the lowest/flattest conifer in the forefront. Intersperse low with high, and wide with conical. Most importantly, refrain from lining conifers in a straight row. That creates too much rigidity.

If you have limited space for planting, such as a balcony, close-range planting is an option for designing with tiny dwarf conifers with growth rates of 1/4 inch per year. Sharon Elkan's container plantings with conifers that were featured in the Fall 2019 CQ are prime examples. A small collection of tiny conifers can be grouped to represent a forest. Aesthetic pruning will maintain your smaller conifers in a mid-sized, urban landscape and also keep all specimens proportional as they mature. See the Spring 2017 CQ for a discussion of aesthetic pruning by Maryann Lewis.

In ensuing years, your garden will begin to suggest other selections of conifers. A deeper understanding of color, texture, and form will guide you as you choose new plants. Don't put limits on yourself. Above all, enjoy the creative process you develop in fashioning a garden that reflects your own taste and your own artistic vision.

Mary Warren, Gardening Artists, 11/15/19, (206) 348-9332 c, 1816 N. 49th St. Seattle, WA 98103 Email: damacefi@gmail.com

Mary Warren earned her BFA from California College of Arts and Crafts and a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Sculpture from the University of Washington. She has been gardening since the age of four, when her mother showed her how to plant fragrant sweet peas.

Photographs are by Mary Warren with thanks to the West Seattle Nursery and Garden Center and Bill Hibler, Conifer Buyer and ACS Member.



Rhododendron occidentale

You are cordially invited to join the
American Rhododendron Society

Benefits: quarterly journal,
seed exchange, chapter affiliation,
conventions

ARS Website: <http://www.rhododendron.org>



SUSANNA FARM NURSERY

The area's finest selection of
Dwarf and Unusual Evergreens,
Japanese Maples and more...

www.susannafarmnursery.com
301-972-7513 or 301-938-3440
1770 White Ground Road
Boys, MD 20841

DIRECTORATE

NATIONAL OFFICERS

President

David Olszyk, PO Box 5631, Lacey, WA 98509,
PH (360) 456-2896. E-mail: president@conifersociety.org

Treasurer

Robin Tower, PO Box 1, Pfafftown, NC 27040-0001
PH (366) 416-4175, E-mail: goldnpaws@gmail.com

Secretary

Suzanne Mahoney, 150 Elm St., Hanover, MA 02339-2828,
PH (781) 826-2915, E-mail: misue393@gmail.com

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Northeastern Region President

Michael Larkin, 7191 Audubon Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17111,
PH (717) 561-0704, E-mail: mlgarden@verizon.net

Director

Michael Mahoney, 150 Elm St, Hanover, MA 02339-2828,
PH (781) 826-2915, E-mail: mdmahoney150@gmail.com

Southeastern Region President

Jeff Harvey, 2910 Poplar Hill Road, Watertown, TN 37184-4539,
PH (615)268-7089, E-mail: jeff@dirtdawgnursery.com

Director

Sandra Horn, 210 Dry Ave., Cary, NC 27511-3208,
PH (919) 336-8138, E-mail: sph3@earthlink.net

Central Region President

Byron Baxter, 1322 Boat Run Ln., New Richmond, OH 45157-8600,
PH (513) 553-6900, E-mail: byron@dendrologicalsales.net

Director

David Speth, N3596E County Trunk A, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085-2933,
PH (920) 467-2002, E-mail: sspeth@excel.net

Western Region President

Joseph Carli, 20227 S. Centerwood Ct., Oregon City, OR 97045-7093,
PH (503) 928-9141, E-mail: allgreengoods@gmail.com

Director

David Rasch, 21 Altura Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87508-8329,
PH (505) 913-4103, E-mail: D.Rasch@q.com

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

National Office Manager

Steven W. Courtney, American Conifer Society, PO Box 1583, Maple Grove, MN 55311,
PH (763) 657-7251, Email: nationaloffice@conifersociety.org

CONIFERQUARTERLY Editor

Dr. Ronald J. Elardo, 5749 Hunter Ct., Adrian, MI 49221-2471,
PH (517) 215-1305, E-mail: ConQuartEditor@gmail.com

Website Editor

Sara Malone, 909 Mustang Ct., Petaluma, CA 94954,
PH (707) 486-0444, E-mail: webeditor@conifersociety.org

Collectors' Conifer Chair

Dennis Lee, PO Box 1332, Stow, OH 44224,
PH (330) 688-4283, E-mail: coniferden@msn.com

Seed Exchange Chair

Jim Brackman, Old Highway 410 SW, Olympia, WA 98512,
PH (253) 736-5864, E-mail: treeguy45@comcast.net

Conifer Registrar

Richard Larson, The Dawes Arboretum, 7770 Jacksontown Rd., Newark, OH 43056,
PH (800) 443-2937, E-mail: ralarson@dawesarb.org

Conifer Database Editor

David Olszyk, PO Box 5631, Lacey, WA 98509,
PH (360) 456-2896. E-mail: conifereditor@conifersociety.org

Scholarship Chairs

Gerald Kral, 900 N. Winton Rd., Rochester, NY 14609,
PH (585) 288-5082, E-mail: geraldkral123@gmail.com

Lois Girton, 2519 Hoover Ave., Ames, IA 50010-4453,
PH (515) 451-3957, E-mail: scholarships@conifersociety.org

Reference Garden Chair

Deborah Merriam, 1465 Bush Hill Rd.,
PH (800) 443-2937, E-mail: dmerriam@comcast.net

Social Media Director

Leah Alcyon, 1685 Hannah Ct., McKinley, CA 95519-7230,
PH (206) 295-6060, E-mail: alcyonleah@gmail.com

